DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 391 115 CG 026 327

TITLE	An Evaluation of Learnfare Case Management Services.
INSTITUTION	Wisconsin State Legislative Audit Bureau, Madison.
SPONS AGENCY	Wisconsin State Dept. of Health and Social Services, Madison.
PUB DATE	[94]
NOTE	141p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adolescents; *Attendance; Attendance Patterns; *Case Workers; *Program Evaluation; Secondary Education; Social Work; State Agencies; Welfare Agencies; *Welfare Recipients; *Welfare Services
IDENTIFIERS	*Learnfare; Wisconsin

ABSTRACT

Wisconsin's Learnfare program requires 13- to 19-year-old recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) to maintain good school attendance or risk losing a portion of their families' grants. The program offers those with attendance problems the opportunity to work with case managers to identify causes of their poor attendance, as well as services such as child daycare, transportation, and alternative education programs to assist in solving attendance programs. The case management process in 10 counties was reviewed. During the 1992-93 school year, poor attendance made more than 4,700 teenagers in these counties a priority for receiving case management services. County implementation of presanction procedures was also reviewed, as were steps in the case management process. It was estimated that 14.1 percent of teenagers for whom case management offers were defined as a priority actually responded to an offer and received an assessment. Two major barriers to effective delivery of case management services were: (1) in most counties, efforts to coordinate Learnfare services with the schools were inadequate; and (2) case managers received inadequate guidance in defining sound case management practices. Recommendations for improvement are provided. Appendices which account for half of the document include presanction notice, presanction checklist and 10 Wisconsin countries case management profiles. (JBJ)

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AN EVALUATION OF
LEARNFARE CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

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AN EVALUATION OF

LEARNFARE CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

State of Wisconsin
Legislative Audit Bureau

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February 9, 1994

Mr. Gerald Whitburn, Secretary
Department of Health and Social Services
1 West Wilson Street
Madison, Wisconsin 53703

Dear Secretary Whitburn:

We have completed a process evaluation of case management services offered to Learnfare program participants during the 1992-93 school year in ten counties, as required by the Interagency Agreement between the Legislative Audit Bureau and the Department of Health and Social Services and by the terms and conditions of the federal waiver authorizing the Learnfare program.

We found that overall, only an estimated 14.1 percent of teenagers in their counties' target populations because of their attendance problems chose to work with case managers to identify the reasons for their poor school attendance so that supportive services could be provided. Many potential clients are believed to refuse service offers because they are receiving similar services or do not want assistance. While we found examples of diligent efforts to provide case management services, these tended to be exceptions to the procedures used in most counties. Improvements are needed in efforts to encourage teenagers and their families to accept case management services; the quality of case management assessments of family problems and service needs; cooperation among case managers, providers of other services, and schools; and case monitoring to ensure service is delivered and addresses the teenagers' attendance problems.

While the initial design of the program allowed counties to develop their own methods for providing case management services, we found that most have not done so systematically. If effective services are to be provided, we believe case managers need more specific written guidance from the Department. The Department responded to this need by creating a *Learnfare Case Management Manual* to be provided to counties early in 1994. The Department will need to review county efforts to strengthen case management services, and to require modifications to 1995 county case management plans if improvements are not made.

We appreciate the courtesy and cooperation we received from department and county staff and the various contract agencies working with counties to deliver case management services. We have included a profile of each county we reviewed in Appendices VII through XVI.

Sincerely,

Dale Cattanach

Dale Cattanach
State Auditor

DC/JF/mh

SUMMARY

Wisconsin's Learnfare program requires 13- to 19-year-old recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) to maintain good school attendance or risk losing a portion of their families' grants. The program offers those who have attendance problems the opportunity to work with case managers to identify the causes of their poor attendance, as well as services such as child day care, transportation, and alternative education programs to assist them and their families in solving attendance problems.

Under the terms of the waiver of federal regulations that allows Wisconsin to operate the Learnfare program, the Department of Health and Social Services must contract with an independent evaluation agency to describe the process for providing case management services. The goals of this process study are:

- describing the procedures for implementing services and the types of services available to Learnfare participants,
- identifying any barriers that limit access to services, and
- suggesting changes to the program that will remove these barriers.

The Department entered into an agreement with the Legislative Audit Bureau to complete this study.

We reviewed the case management process in the ten counties that received supplemental state and federal funding to provide services for the past three years. A total of $2,169,260 in state, federal, and local funds has been made available in Brown, Dane, Douglas, Eau Claire, Kenosha, Milwaukee, Racine, Rock, Sheboygan, and Winnebago counties in 1993 to provide case management services. During the 1992-93 school year, poor attendance made more than 4,700 teenagers in these ten counties a priority for receiving case management services.

We examined these counties' processes for providing case management during the 1992-93 school year. Case management services are offered to all Learnfare teenagers who had ten or more unexcused absences in a semester and, therefore, become subject to monthly monitoring to ensure they have no more than two unexcused absences in a subsequent month. Three or more unexcused absences would result in a sanction for these teenagers unless they demonstrate a good cause for being exempt from the Learnfare attendance requirement. The average age of teenagers with reported attendance problems during our study period was 15.8 to 16.7 years, depending on the county; more than half of the teenagers were female, and 15.3 to 40.6 percent were heads of their own households.

Under a June 1992 stipulation agreement between the Department and Legal Action of Wisconsin, which represented Learnfare participants in a class-action lawsuit, any family threatened with a Learnfare sanction must be given adequate opportunity to:

- contest and correct any inaccurate attendance reports,
- establish the existence of circumstances that may release it from Learnfare attendance requirements, and
- be informed of the requirements of the Learnfare program and the actions required of the family to restore the full amount of the AFDC grant.

County implementation of the presanction procedures established to meet these requirements was reviewed jointly by the Department and Legal Action of Wisconsin between late 1992 and September 1993. A number of problems were identified, mostly in documenting that required procedures had been followed. Counties subsequently prepared corrective action plans, and improvements have been made. However, the time devoted to the procedures themselves, and to their improvement, appears to be one of the reasons counties have had limited success in providing case management services following presanction reviews.

The steps in the case management process include:

- offering case management services to teenagers with attendance problems;
- working with those who respond, and their families, to assess the reasons for poor attendance;
- developing a service plan to identify social services and educational resources to assist with attendance problems;
- referral to needed services; and
- monitoring to ensure services are provided and effective.

Standardized forms mailed to all teenagers with attendance problems include offers of case management prescribed in the stipulation agreement, but these offers rarely result in a response. They are difficult to understand, or perhaps lost among many other communications that AFDC recipients receive.

Eight of the ten counties we reviewed made additional, individualized offers of case management through letters, telephone calls, and in some cases home visits, although both the number and the quality of these efforts vary among counties and case managers. Response to these offers, as evidenced by the number of assessments completed for teenagers to whom offers were made, ranged from no response in Eau Claire County to 34 percent in Kenosha County. We estimated that in the ten counties, 14.1 percent of teenagers for whom case management offers were defined as a priority actually responded to an offer and received an assessment.

Among the reasons clients refuse services may be the fact that some potential clients are already receiving services through other programs or have received services in the past that failed to meet their needs. For example, of the 59 AFDC teenagers in our Sheboygan County sample who were reported to have poor attendance for Learnfare purposes, 29, or 49.2 percent, were already receiving social services, mostly truancy-related, by the time an attendance problem was identified for Learnfare purposes.

Other reasons cited by county staff and clients for the low response rate to offers of case management services include:

- limited or ineffective efforts on the part of some, but not all, counties;
- the attitude of teenagers who are so dissatisfied or discouraged with school that they refuse to consider returning regardless of the effect on the AFDC grant;
- a lack of understanding among AFDC teenagers and families that Learnfare ties school attendance to the amount of a grant; and
- the amount of time that elapses between the beginning of poor attendance and the imposition of a sanction, which can be several months and delays action to assist with attendance problems.

When clients requested case management services, nearly all counties consistently and promptly initiated the assessment process. The most thorough assessments of problems confronting Learnfare teenagers and their families, and of the services needed to address them, were those completed by staff in Kenosha and Sheboygan counties. Case managers in both of these counties conduct comprehensive interviews with the teenagers and their families, usually in their homes. In Kenosha County, assessments appear to have benefited from a well-developed network of service agencies, which allowed effective consultation and referral. Sheboygan County's case manager routinely checks potential clients' records of previous and ongoing social services before performing an assessment. Truant Learnfare teenagers in Eau Claire County had also received thorough assessments in conjunction with court-ordered services, but no assessments were performed in that county solely as a result of the Learnfare program.

While some thorough assessments were completed in some other counties, assessments elsewhere could be improved by ensuring:

- the family, as well as the teenager, is always involved in the assessment process;
- the assessment includes consultation with school officials to determine what steps are needed to return the teenager to the classroom or to an alternative education program;
- needed consultation with other professionals, such as family counseling, is identified; and
- all identified needs are documented so that as turnover occurs among case managers, a family's progress can still be monitored.

The quality of the service plans developed from the assessments was directly related to the quality of the assessments. In fact, only five counties had service plans that consistently identified specific goals and service providers: Brown, Kenosha, Milwaukee, Racine, and Sheboygan. Among these, some service plans were limited in scope, often because the assessments had involved the family exclusively, so that only the family's perceptions of its needs were addressed, or because the case manager had considered only those services offered by the service agency for which he or she worked, which had been contracted by the county to provide case management services. Some services not identified in the service plans were provided to teenagers, notably child care and transportation, because these are automatically available to Learnfare participants who request them.

Among the five counties that created substantive service plans for their Learnfare case management clients, we observed only one, Sheboygan, in which the required referrals for services were consistently made in an effective manner, and in which routine follow-up with regard to the clients' progress occurred consistently throughout the study period. Proper referrals and follow-up were also apparent in both Brown and Kenosha counties at certain times of the year but were at other times less than satisfactory.

Apart from weaknesses in county methods of providing case management services and the lack of client cooperation, we identified two major barriers to effective delivery of case management services. First, in most counties, efforts to coordinate Learnfare services with the schools are inadequate. Schools are responsible for enforcing habitual truancy laws, which require them to address students' attendance problems by providing services similar to those provided through Learnfare case management. Since all Learnfare participants who are subject to monthly monitoring or sanction have already become habitual truants, Learnfare case managers should contact schools during the assessment process to determine what efforts have already been made; in most counties, however, they do not. The rarity with which school officials appear to be involved in Learnfare case management assessments and service planning must be considered unacceptable.

Second, we found that case managers have received inadequate guidance in defining sound case management practices. The Department allowed counties to develop their own methods for providing case management services so that counties would have the flexibility to create systems most suited to local needs. Because of the varying degrees to which other truancy-related programs had been developed among the counties, this was probably an appropriate initial strategy. However, most counties did not assume responsibility for developing the methods to be used to provide case management, or the goals to be achieved.

During the course of this study, the Department developed its *Learnfare Case Management Manual,* a draft of which was distributed to counties in December 1993. The manual provides needed guidance in how to carry out effective offers, assessments, and service plans. While this manual will clarify expectations of case managers, we believe the Department will need to increase oversight of county case management efforts to ensure effective services are provided. *We recommend the Department of Health and Social Services, beginning in June 1994, review county* *efforts to improve case management as a result of this report and that it require modifications to 1995 county case management plans if improvements are not made.*

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INTRODUCTION

The Learnfare program is a feature of Wisconsin's Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program intended to motivate school attendance in order to reduce long-term dependency on public assistance. The program has two methods of doing this. The first is a financial penalty, or sanction, for excessive unexcused absences, which is created by removing a truant teenager from the family's grant for each month in which attendance is less than required. The second is case management, the subject of this report.

To assist in the prevention or correction of attendance problems, teenagers subject to Learnfare, and their families, are offered case management services that include assessment of the causes of the attendance problem and referral to supportive services, such as day care and transportation. Case management services were not a feature of the Learnfare program when it was instituted in 1988. In June 1990, however, the federal Department of Health and Human Services required that such services be available to Learnfare participants as a condition of the waiver of federal regulations authorizing operation of the Learnfare program. State and federal funding for the provision of these services, provided to the Department of Health and Social Services for allocation to the counties, began in fiscal year (FY) 1990-91.

This report describes case management in ten counties that received additional funding to provide case management services in 1991, 1992, and 1993 because they had 35 or more AFDC teenagers with reported attendance problems in at least one month of each of these years. During the 1992-93 school year, 8,262 teenage AFDC recipients in Brown, Dane, Douglas, Eau Claire, Kenosha, Milwaukee, Racine, Rock, Sheboygan, and Winnebago counties were reported to have less than adequate attendance, and therefore to be potential subjects for the counties' case management services. They represent 87 percent of estimated Learnfare recipients with attendance problems statewide.

When case management services were added to the Learnfare program, counties were given authority to develop their own methods of service delivery, whether by county staff or through private social services agencies, so that their differing practices could be taken into account. This evaluation, which is required by the terms of the federal waiver and conducted under an interagency agreement between the Department and the Legislative Audit Bureau, was undertaken to review the case management process and the characteristics of the population being served in each of ten counties. Our principle purposes were to:

- describe the provision of case management services in selected counties, including implementation procedures and types of services available to Learnfare participants;

- assess the extent to which barriers exist that limit access to case management or other support services; and

- identify potential changes at the state or county level to remove access barriers or improve implementation of case management services.

The methods we used are detailed in Appendix I.

Wisconsin's Learnfare Program

Teenagers receiving AFDC who are between the ages of 13 and 19, have not yet completed high school or its equivalent, and live with their parents or other responsible relatives or are parents themselves are required to attend school as a condition of receiving AFDC benefits. Those who have a good cause for not attending school may be temporarily excused from Learnfare's attendance requirements. A teenager will be excused for good cause if he or she:

- is caring for his or her own newborn less than 45 days old;

- is caring for his or her own infant less than 90 days old when the school has no on-site day care or home instruction program, or in compliance with a doctor's orders;

- needs child care, which is not available at affordable costs or within reasonable travel time;

- is exempt from compulsory attendance for religious reasons;

- has been expelled from his or her original school, and no other is available or willing to accept the teenager;

- faces any other circumstances prohibiting school attendance that are beyond his or her control.

Attendance monitoring and sanctioning an AFDC grant are, for most Learnfare families, procedures that require several steps over time. Every teenager required to participate in the Learnfare program has his or her school attendance reviewed once every six months by the AFDC economic support specialist assigned to the family's case. If a teenager was absent from school without an excuse for ten or more days in the previous semester, his or her family is notified that attendance will be monitored each month. The notification form includes information on the availability of case management services and instructions on how to request such services (see Appendix II).

If a teenager whose attendance is monitored monthly is absent without an excuse for three or more full days in one month, the family's AFDC grant can be reduced in a subsequent month. This reduction, or sanction, effectively removes the truant teenager from the grant for one month. The amount of the reduction depends upon the number of people in the family, but it ranges from $60 to $190 and is partially offset by an increase in food stamps. Before a grant can be reduced, the family receives a "presanction notice" (Appendix III), which includes the information upon which the decision to sanction is being considered and instructions on how the family can question or contest the impending sanction. This presanction process, which includes verification of the reported attendance data for all students of Milwaukee Public Schools and for cases elsewhere in which the family questions the data, is intended to ensure due process and the accuracy and appropriateness of sanctions. Presanction notices also include an offer of case management services.

In addition, any teenager who ceases to attend school or who is not enrolled in school is subject to sanction as a dropout, without previous monthly attendance monitoring. Teenagers who can establish a good cause for not attending school will not be sanctioned.

AFDC teenagers who are not exempt from Learnfare, therefore, are designated at all times as having one of four statuses:

- students with no reported attendance problems are considered in **good standing**;
- those whose prior-semester attendance was inadequate are subject to **monthly monitoring**;
- those whose most recently monitored monthly attendance was inadequate, those who have dropped out of school, and those who refuse to allow schools to provide attendance information to the Learnfare program are **sanctioned**; and
- those with an acceptable reason for not attending school are granted **good cause** release from Learnfare requirements.

Case Management Services

In the federal waiver defining Learnfare requirements, and in policy memoranda from the Department to county administrators, three components have been identified as part of Learnfare case management. In addition to presanction activities, case management assistance for Learnfare families is to include:

- an assessment of the problems contributing to poor school attendance;
- identification and referral to the services needed to correct those problems; and
- the provision of follow-up services, as appropriate.

Assessments for Learnfare case management are expected to review the issues related to the teenager's ability to attend school and may include the teenager's educational performance; child-care needs and transportation problems; juvenile or criminal court contacts and medical or health problems of any family member; and basic living needs such as housing, heat, water, and food. Department policy documents suggest that case managers might identify a need for referral to other resources for professional evaluation of, for example, possible health problems, abuse or neglect situations, or substance abuse.

After an assessment is performed, Learnfare case managers are to construct a family service plan identifying the services required to address the causes of the teenager's attendance problems. If services are unavailable within 30 days of the completion of the service plan, and no acceptable substitute is available, case managers are required to complete an "exception report," which is to be filed with the Department, although an exception report has no effect on the amount of a family's grant.

Case managers are also expected to monitor client families' progress with regard to the services. Services are terminated when the teenager is no longer subject to Learnfare requirements, when the attendance becomes satisfactory, or when the family ceases to participate in the services. The family's response to case management is entirely voluntary; it has no direct bearing on the Learnfare status of the teenager. Only adequate attendance or the establishment of an exemption or good-cause excuse can remove a sanction.

Many Learnfare teenagers have clearly identifiable, discrete service needs, such as day care, and are able to make necessary arrangements with minimal direction or assistance from case managers. However, other teenagers and their families have more complex problems and have difficulty following the required procedures for obtaining services. Although case managers might on occasion provide direct counseling or other services to their clients, the primary role of case managers is to assist clients with identification of their needs, location of and introduction to necessary services, coordination of various services, and advocacy in those instances when clients need assistance with other service providers or authorities. Unlike direct service providers, who are prepared to assist families with one or two specific needs, case managers are to take a more comprehensive look at the family's situation, to identify the need and arrange for multiple services to be provided by others.

Counties have been encouraged to develop their own systems of Learnfare case management. Among the ten counties studied, we found a wide variety of arrangements: Racine and Kenosha counties had relatively large programs in which private social services agencies provided Learnfare case management by contract to clients identified by the counties. Dane and Brown counties had smaller programs, also involving subcontracted agencies. In Douglas, Eau Claire, Sheboygan, Rock, and Winnebago counties, Learnfare case management was not a distinct service but an adjunct of other programs. Since the study period, Rock County has made extensive changes to its case management procedures. Appendices VII through XVI contain more detailed profiles of each county's case management services.

In Milwaukee County, a complex presanction process required by an agreement that settled a class-action lawsuit initiates case management. Responsibilities are distributed among the county Department of Human Services; Milwaukee Public Schools and other local school districts; and a private social services agency, Wee Care Day Care Nursery Centers, Inc. Students whose attendance problems are severe enough to merit consideration of sanctions are referred for case management services.

Case Management Funding

Additional funding has been provided to counties for case management services. Administrative presanction activities in counties other than Milwaukee are included with other AFDC administrative costs, which are reimbursed from state and federal AFDC funds as provided in annual contracts between the State and counties. In addition, counties in which more than 35 teenagers were sanctioned or monitored in any one month in the previous year are eligible for supplemental funds distributed from a state appropriation, matched with federal funds, to be used for Learnfare case management services. Table 1 shows calendar year (CY) 1992 and CY 1993 case management funding and spending for the nine counties other than Milwaukee included in this evaluation.

Table 1

Supplemental Learnfare Case Management Funding, Budgeted and Actual

	1992		1993	
County	Allocated	Paid	Allocated	Paid*
Brown	$26,873	$ 4,382	$28,992	$ 8,191
Dane	28,980	28,980	30,956	28,733
Douglas	17,593	1,546	18,874	2,112
Eau Claire	5,465	5,465	5,821	5,821
Kenosha	36,210	36,210	39,641	39,641
Racine	57,675	57,675	62,013	57,673
Rock	46,288	46,288	49,720	41,098
Sheboygan	3,130	3,130	3,369	3,369
Winnebago	9,906	9,906	10,614	9,428
Total	$232,120	$193,582	$250,000	$196,066

* through November 1993

In addition to its regular allocation for AFDC administrative costs, Milwaukee County received $910,000 in both CY 1992 and CY 1993 to fund the cost of its contract with Wee Care Day Care Nursery Centers, Inc., and $275,260 in CY 1993 for the county Department of Human Services Learnfare Unit. It is not possible to determine the proportion of these funds spent on presanction activities because through most of this period, Wee Care staff performed both presanction and case management activities. State and federal funds totaling $66,000 in CY 1992 and $400,000 in CY 1993 were provided to Milwaukee Public Schools (which also provided $334,000 in CY 1993) to cover the cost of its attendance verification activities. When these amounts are combined, a total of $2,169,260 in addition to regular administrative funds was available to the ten counties in CY 1993 for presanction and case management activities. Milwaukee County received $1,919,260 of this total.

In addition to case management activities, Learnfare teenagers and their families receive a variety of services, including child day care, transportation, alternative education, and other counseling and supportive services. Although Learnfare day care and transportation services are no longer budgeted separately, the Legislative Fiscal Bureau estimated that in CY 1993, $2,453,100 in state and federal funds will have been spent for Learnfare child day care and $329,200 for Learnfare transportation.

Other special grants to counties for services to AFDC teenagers with attendance problems are listed in Table 2. When combined with day care and transportation funding, these special grants bring the amount available for Learnfare-related services other than case management, apart from other community resources, to $7,839,620 in CY 1993.

The 1993-95 Biennial Budget Act provides an additional $557,600 in state and federal funds for FY 1993-94, and $1,388,200 for FY 1994-95, for the delivery of case management. Currently, the Department plans to allocate most of these new funds to counties on the same basis as in 1993, although approximately $160,840 will be awarded to counties for special case management-related projects.

It is difficult to estimate the per case cost of providing adequate case management services, since most counties do not budget separately for case management. Although all counties report to the Department on anticipated costs and numbers of clients to be served, these figures are not comparable among the counties because the method of identifying a "served" client varies and is not always clearly defined, even within a county.

For example, Dane County's contracted provider of case management services anticipated costs of $349.53 per client referred for CY 1993, which would cover offers of services, assessments, and follow-up. In contrast, from January through September 1993, Brown County's contracted agency, which provided case management assessments to 32 clients and extended additional offers to others who did not respond or refused services, had expenditures totaling $5,770. Brown County, therefore, spent an average of $180 for each case that received an assessment. The cost of providing case management services to an individual client, however, may vary according to the effort required to extend additional offers of services and the amount of monitoring required in each case.

Table 2

Other Projects Serving AFDC Teenagers with Attendance Problems

	CY 1992	CY 1993	Activities Funded
Kenosha County	$1,350,834	$ 966,176	Operation of a network of agencies to coordinate case management and service delivery for AFDC teenagers; federal and local funds
Racine County	409,272	429,734	Case management services to AFDC teenagers apprehended for delinquency; federal and local funds
Rock County	0	220,486	Four peer support and education projects; federal and local funds
Waukesha County	322,248	327,036	Family services to promote teenager school participation; federal and local funds
Cooperative Educational Service Agency 5	574,104	515,600	Activities promoting work maturity skills and participation in educational settings; federal and local funds
Chippewa County	0	150,696	Alternative education with in-home support; federal and local funds
Douglas County	0	130,000	In-school supportive services for pregnant teenagers and teenage parents; federal and local funds
Milwaukee County	2,117,692	2,317,592	Alternative education program offered by Milwaukee Public Schools and Job Service; federal and state funds
Total	$4,774,150	$5,057,320	

In comparing costs and services from these two counties with the services we believe were envisioned when case management began, it appears counties spend approximately $180 to $350 per teenager to provide case management for teenagers who request services.

Clients Eligible for Case Management Services

In August 1993, there were 233,360 persons on AFDC in Wisconsin, of whom 28,805 were in the Learnfare 13- to 19-year-old age group. Both federal and state policies require teenagers whose AFDC grants are currently sanctioned to be considered high-priority clients for case management services, although any family or teenager subject to Learnfare is eligible to receive case management. Most counties consider the target population to be those teenagers who had attendance problems as indicated by their "monitored," "good cause," or "sanctioned" status. We estimate that in all 72 counties, a total of 9,476 teenagers had such a status recorded at the end of any month during the 1992-93 school year, and that 64.3 percent of these teenagers lived in Milwaukee County. Offers of case management were routinely extended to monitored teenagers, teenagers for whom a sanction was being considered, and those for whom a sanction had been recorded.

As shown in Table 3, differences in the characteristics of the case-management target population exist among the ten counties we studied. They may be attributable to demographic differences in local AFDC populations, school districts' practices, and other variables. The number of teenagers with reported attendance problems is the most dramatic difference: case managers in Milwaukee County have a potential caseload that is at least 13.5 times the size of any other county's.

The average age of potential case management clients does not appear to differ widely among the ten counties: in most, they are older 15-year-olds or younger 16-year-olds. However, when the distribution of teenagers within the complete age range of 13 to 19 is taken into account, differences begin to emerge. The percentage of 13-year-olds among all teenagers with reported attendance problems ranges from a low of 5.1 percent in Sheboygan County to a high of 12.8 percent in Kenosha County. The percentage of 19-year-olds ranges from a low of 5.9 percent in Eau Claire County to a high of 18.6 percent in Rock County.

In every county, females outnumbered males in the population of Learnfare teenagers with reported attendance problems. This was expected because of the number of single teenage parents, who are almost exclusively female, receiving AFDC as heads of their own households. In Winnebago County, more than 40 percent of the AFDC teenagers with attendance problems were heads of households; in Eau Claire County, the comparable figure was only 15.3 percent. Birth rates among teenagers and rates at which teenage mothers choose to keep their babies and establish their own households probably differ among the counties. A teenage mother's decision to establish her own household may also be influenced by the availability and acceptability of support services for those who want to continue in school. Learnfare staff in Eau Claire County, for example, believe that the presence of child day care facilities in the two public high schools that serve most of the AFDC population is an important factor limiting serious attendance problems among teenage mothers in that county.

Table 3

Characteristics of Teenagers with Reported Attendance Problems*

1992-93 School Year

County	Students	Average Age	Sex M	Sex F	Head of Household	Percentage with Sanction**
Brown	255	16.2	39.2%	60.8%	29.0%	48%
Dane	384	16.0	37.8	62.2	22.9	26
Douglas	85	16.7	36.5	63.5	28.2	59
Eau Claire	85	15.8	48.2	51.8	15.3	16
Kenosha	422	15.9	42.9	57.1	25.6	44
Milwaukee	6,093	16.3	38.3	61.7	21.7	36
Racine	450	16.4	28.7	71.3	30.0	49
Rock	323	16.5	29.7	70.3	38.7	45
Sheboygan	59	16.1	45.8	54.2	18.6	22
Winnebago	106	16.5	31.1	68.9	40.6	40

* Teenagers whose Learnfare status was "monitored," "sanctioned," or "good cause" at the end of any benefit-month from September 1992 through May 1993.

** Teenagers whose Learnfare status was "sanctioned" at the end of any benefit-month from September 1992 through May 1993.

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PRESANCTION PROCEDURES

Presanction procedures are administrative activities required before a monthly attendance sanction or a dropout sanction can be imposed. They are not intended to assist the family in the resolution of the attendance problems, but rather to ensure that the family has received due process before its AFDC grant is reduced by a Learnfare sanction. The presanction procedures are intended to give the family an adequate opportunity to:

- contest and correct any inaccurate attendance reports,
- establish the existence of circumstances that may release it from Learnfare attendance requirements, and
- be informed of the requirements of the Learnfare program and the actions required of the family to restore the full amount of the AFDC grant.

Since these procedures were added to counties' administrative responsibilities, counties have been criticized for not following them and have committed additional staff resources to improving the process. These efforts have, however, taken attention away from efforts to provide case management services. The required procedures have also limited counties' abilities to provide case management services on a timely basis. This is true especially in Milwaukee County.

Presanction Requirements

In its first years, the Learnfare program experienced extensive problems with the administration and accuracy of attendance reporting. In a previous evaluation of Learnfare program administration conducted in 1990 (Legislative Audit Bureau report 90-23), we found a high error rate by county economic support workers in determining appropriate Learnfare sanctions. At that time, 84 percent of the appealed sanctions had been overturned because of processing errors, inadequate or inaccurate attendance information, or new information being provided by the client.

These problems, among others, led to the July 1990 injunction by the Federal Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin, in Milwaukee, which prevented further imposition of Learnfare sanctions in Milwaukee County and, in April 1991, statewide. The lawsuit prompting this injunction was *Kronquist* v. *the Secretary of the Department of Health and Social Services*, a class-action suit filed by Legal Action of Wisconsin. The plaintiffs in the lawsuit alleged violation of due process and equal protection rights in the imposition of Learnfare sanctions.

The lawsuit was settled by the court's acceptance of a stipulation agreement reached between the Department and Legal Action of Wisconsin in September 1992. In response to the due-process concerns detailed in the complaint, the procedures specified in the agreement focus on the accuracy of enrollment and attendance data, the quality of exemption and good-cause determination procedures, and the adequacy of client notices. The stipulation agreement sets forth one set of requirements for counties other than Milwaukee, and another set of requirements for Milwaukee County.

As is typical for procedures intended to ensure individuals' due process rights, the presanction procedures in the stipulation agreement are specified in detail, with required forms to be completed properly on a precise timetable. Before each sanction is imposed, which may be monthly in the case of attendance sanctions, county AFDC staff known as economic support specialists must follow delineated procedures to provide families with:

- information on the dates of school absences for which the decision to sanction is being considered;
- information about the process of contesting a sanction and establishing an exemption or good-cause release from Learnfare requirements, and assistance in doing so, if requested; and
- an opportunity to contest the sanction.

In addition, county economic support specialists are required to create specific documentation that these requirements have been met, whether the families responded, and how any response was handled. In any month in which a school reports that a monitored teenager has more than two unexcused absences, or in which an economic support specialist obtains information that a teenager has dropped out of school, the worker must complete a presanction notice.

If the family questions or contests the information reported in the presanction notice, the county must verify the reported absence dates with the school. The economic support specialist is also required to document and consider any information the family provides that might release the teenager from Learnfare requirements. If the family is unable to produce verification of its claims and requests assistance, the economic support specialist is required to assist the family in obtaining the verification, and, if it remains unavailable, to use judgment in making the sanction decision on the best evidence available. That is, families are not to be denied exemptions and good-cause releases from Learnfare requirements solely because their claims cannot be verified in writing.

Completing the verification process usually takes at least one month, and the effort to provide case management services to the family seldom begins before the presanction process is completed. Thus, in every county except Milwaukee, the effort to address a teenager's school attendance problem is usually delayed at least one month beyond the time county staff become aware that a problem exists.

Procedures are similar in Milwaukee County, with the notable exception that before the presanction notice is sent to the family, all reports of poor attendance are verified by Milwaukee Public Schools for teenagers who were or are enrolled there, before the family is notified that poor attendance has been reported. In the attendance sanction procedure for Milwaukee Public Schools teenagers:

- The Department creates a computer tape identifying all Learnfare-mandatory teenagers who should be enrolled in Milwaukee Public Schools at the end of each calendar month and forwards this tape to the school district.
- The school district then records attendance for each of these teenagers and returns the tape to the Department.
- The Department sends an attendance verification form for each teenager who had too many unexcused absences back to Milwaukee Public Schools.
- The school district verifies the attendance of each student with at least two independent sources of information, and then forwards the verified attendance reports to the contracted case management agency, Wee Care Day Care Nursery Centers, Inc.
- Wee Care then sends presanction forms containing attendance information to each family, gives the families five days to question the information, and meets with those families who respond to determine whether the information is accurate and whether a good cause exists for the teenager's absences.
- Wee Care then notifies the county Department of Human Services regarding its determination in each case; sanctions are entered for families who did not respond or successfully contest the entry of a sanction.
- The county then enters a sanction on each family's AFDC grant, so that the next monthly check the family receives will be reduced; Wee Care issues individual offers of case management services to sanctioned families.

This process requires a minimum of four months to complete, and thereby delays the initiation of case management services substantially.

Implementation of Presanction Procedures

Since October 1992, when the presanction process was revised in response to *Kronquist*, the Department has engaged in extensive training and oversight activities in selected counties to ensure that the procedures are followed. Because these procedures have been entered as a judgment in federal court, any deviation or failure to implement them could result in a renewed lawsuit. From late 1992 through September 1993, staff of the Department and Legal Action of Wisconsin conducted a series of oversight visits in an attempt to make sure that counties were following the prescribed presanction procedures.

As a result of these reviews, the Department identified several shortcomings in presanction activities, which were summarized in a September 1993 memorandum to county AFDC administrators. These included:

- incorrect completion of the required presanction letter to the family, most often resulting from failure to include all dates of unexcused absence reported by the school, both for the previous month and the previous semester if the school's reports from the previous semester provided the basis for monthly monitoring;
- imposing a Learnfare sanction without documenting whether the family responded to the presanction letter;
- inadequate documentation of efforts made to determine whether the teenager was exempt from Learnfare requirements or had a good-cause reason for not attending school before imposing the sanction; and
- inconsistent suspension of continuing sanctions for dropouts, which are to be discontinued whenever the dropout has a good-cause reason for missing school.

To correct these problems, the Department has taken several steps. Each county has received a report on the shortcomings discovered, and specific instructions on how to remedy each mishandled case. The counties have also been required to submit corrective action plans, which vary in level of effort among the counties. Most corrective action plans include a procedure for close supervisory review of sanction procedures, along with additional staff training. In Milwaukee County, responsibilities among case management staff of Wee Care, the contracted case management agency, were also redistributed to allow staff to specialize in either good-cause determinations or case management services.

In addition, the Department has instructed its area administrators to review every sanction in each county except Milwaukee on a monthly basis, to make sure that procedures are properly followed. To improve compliance among economic support specialists and enable efficient review of their actions, the Department also introduced a new requirement, in August 1993, that a presanction checklist (Appendix V) be completed before any sanctions are imposed. Over time, these efforts are likely to result in a reduced error rate for sanctions.

Because efforts to sanction truant teenagers require additional work, are demonstrably error-prone, and are subject to close oversight and appeal, economic support specialists could choose to ignore reports of poor attendance. If they did, Learnfare requirements would be applied inconsistently. When fully implemented in 1994, a new, statewide AFDC eligibility system is expected to automatically supply the dates of previous absences to the presanction notice. Nevertheless, in most counties, no procedures exist to ensure economic support specialists act on reports of poor attendance, and future reviews by the Department could include tests to determine whether reported attendance problems are acted on consistently.

County managers and staff also told us that time devoted to completing presanction verification activities, especially after problems are identified, limits the time available to develop and deliver case management services. This is also evident in county expenditures of case management funds for verification procedures. While records in all counties do not separate expenditures, it is apparent that Winnebago County spent all, and Milwaukee County spent at least half of, its case management funding on verification activities.

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INITIATION OF CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Although case management services were offered to all appropriate clients on standardized notice forms, few clients accepted services in most counties. Each county identified a target population for Learnfare case management services: some had policies or practices of extending individual offers of services to all Learnfare teenagers with reported attendance problems, while others limited individual offers to teenagers with sanctions.

Among the ten counties we evaluated, Kenosha County appeared to be the most successful in engaging clients in case management: 34 percent of the clients in our sample of that county's target population received a Learnfare case management assessment at some time during the study period. Winnebago County, in which no Learnfare case management assessments were performed and no other attendance-related services were documented, appears to have been the least successful. While some of the causes of low participation are beyond county control, efforts to inform potential clients of the availability and usefulness of services could be strengthened.

Learnfare Case Management Assessments

To evaluate counties' success in initiating case management services for target populations, we examined county records for Learnfare teenagers who met each county's criteria for receiving priority treatment in at least one month during the 1992-93 school year. In most counties, priority teenagers include those with attendance problems making them subject to monthly monitoring. Dane County's policy during this period was to make individual offers to sanctioned teenagers, teenage parents and pregnant teenagers, and monitored teenagers who are 13 and 14 years old. Milwaukee County's policy gives priority to sanctioned teenagers and those with good cause. Target populations for the ten counties totaled 4,722.

We determined that the most reliable indicator of whether a family had accepted the offer of case management services was the presence of an assessment in the case. We saw only one instance of a request for services to which the case manager did not respond. Although it is possible that other, undocumented requests were made and received no response, in every other documented case it appeared that case managers were willing and able to meet promptly with families who requested services. We saw several instances of clients making appointments for an assessment but failing to keep the appointments; we categorized these cases as families who had not accepted the county's offer.

We reviewed county records to determine whether each teenager in our sample had received a Learnfare case management assessment at any time from the beginning of the study period through August 31, 1993, or had a current Learnfare case management assessment still in effect at that time. The results of this review are shown in Table 4 and were used to estimate that 14.1 percent of those Learnfare teenagers in their counties' target populations who were to be given priority for case management services received assessments during our study period.

Table 4

Priority Teenager Assessments
1992-93 School Year

	Cases in Sample	Cases Having Learnfare Assessments Number	Cases Having Learnfare Assessments Percentage
Brown	55	7	12.7%
Dane	45	5 *	11.1
Douglas	85	3 **	3.5
Eau Claire	85	0 ***	0.0
Kenosha	87	30	34.5
Milwaukee	200	26	13.0
Racine	96	18	18.8
Rock	65	3	4.6
Sheboygan	59	5 ***	8.5
Winnebago	24	0	0.0
Estimated for ten counties			14.1%

* In Dane County, target-group teenagers were not referred to Learnfare case managers if they had an existing case that included attendance issues. Three cases in our sample, an additional 6.7 percent, were handled this way.

** In Douglas County, an additional 14 teenagers were served by the Superior School District's Teen-Parent Program, which provides services similar to Learnfare case management. If these are included, an additional 16.5 percent received services.

*** In Eau Claire and Sheboygan counties, case managers did not complete an assessment if a teenager was currently receiving other truancy-related services. If pre-existing assessments are included, an additional 14.1 percent of the Eau Claire County cases and an additional 30.5 percent of the Sheboygan County cases can be counted as receiving truancy-related services, although not as the result of Learnfare.

Case Management Offers

Both the frequency and the content of case management offers affect counties' abilities to engage clients in case management services. Two types of offers are being made:

routine offers on preprinted forms, and more individualized offers by letter or telephone.

Routine Offers of Services

Until mid-1993, only one offer of case management services had to be made, concurrently with the notification of the first sanction affecting a family's grant. The 1993-95 Biennial Budget Act, effective August 1993, added a statutory requirement that an offer also be made upon the initiation of monthly monitoring.

In fact, however, offers of case management were already being made routinely as part of various notification procedures. For example, all families with teenagers on monthly monitoring receive at least one notice of the availability of case management services as part of their notification of monthly monitoring. Families of dropouts, who are sanctioned and not subject to monthly monitoring, receive two routine offers: the first when the sanction is being considered, and the second after it takes effect. In subsequent months, they receive no additional notices. Finally, families whose grants are repeatedly sanctioned for poor monthly attendance receive two notices each month. Nevertheless, staff in all counties reported that they rarely or never receive responses to these routine offers of services, which are included on pre-printed or computer-generated department forms.

The phrasing of the offers, which was specified in the *Kronquist* stipulation, may account for some of the lack of response. For example, the monthly monitoring notice does not indicate what Learnfare case management is or what its purpose might be. In contrast, the presanction notice states, "We can also discuss services available to help correct attendance problems."

Likewise, for counties other than Milwaukee, the notice that a family's AFDC grant is going to be reduced indicates that "Learnfare case management services are also available to help with the school attendance problem. For more information about Learnfare case management, contact . . ." (see Appendix IV). In Milwaukee County, families are informed in their grant-reduction notices that questions about the accuracy of attendance information should be directed to Wee Care Day Care, and that "Wee Care Day Care can also provide you with information about additional services available to help with a school attendance problem."

All these offers, however, are only part of a formal communication and may not stand out among the more consequential content of the other material. Some county staff express skepticism that any offers of help included with punitive or authoritative communications, such as presanction letters, will be perceived as sincere. They also suggest routine offers may be lost among the volume of communications that clients receive with regard to their various assistance programs. Other county staff believe that these routine offers are lacking in authority: these staff believe that if the Learnfare case managers had direct authority to make decisions involving a client's AFDC case, response rates would be higher.

To improve response to its initial offers of case management services, the Department could modify notices to make the offers more visible and to clarify that clients are being offered personalized assistance with whatever problems they have related to the teenager's school attendance. Alternatively, counties could accompany these standardized forms with inviting enclosures created to describe services available, as Kenosha County has done. More recently, Kenosha County case managers have instituted a practice of delivering letters offering case management in person to teenagers' homes, in order to have face-to-face contact with potential clients. However, changing the wording in the standard forms would require the agreement of the Federal Court, and presumably Legal Action of Wisconsin.

Additional Methods of Offering Services

Staff in all counties believe that additional efforts are necessary to engage Learnfare teenagers and their families, even those experiencing financial sanction, in supportive services. Eight of the ten counties we studied—all except Rock and Winnebago—attempted at some time during the study period to involve clients in case management by making separate, individual offers. All eight counties give priority to making individual offers to sanctioned teenagers and their families, in accordance with the Department's stated priorities. Six of these counties' policies extend individual offers to additional teenagers on monthly monitoring or with good-cause releases from Learnfare requirements. Recently, Rock County staff have begun making individual offers to sanctioned teenagers and making occasional offers to teenagers on monthly monitoring.

Most often during the period of our study, individual offers were letters mailed to the family's home address, and they usually requested that the client call to set up an appointment. In other cases, letters informed clients that appointments had already been made for them. Letters were addressed either to the teenager or to the AFDC case head, depending upon the practice in each county or of individual case managers. The quality of these letters varied among counties and even within individual case managers' records. In some cases, we observed engaging letters written in understandable language, such as a handwritten letter from a Racine case manager to a potential client, who was a teenage mother, which requested the teenager to call and described a few of the services that the case manager could arrange for teenage mothers.

In other instances, letters were written in confusing or unclear language, or they appeared unlikely to obtain a response for other reasons:

- Several letters in two counties requested clients to meet with a case manager at a certain date and time, but neglected to specify the meeting place.

- Among those letters that included the location of the appointment, few provided directions or instructions on access by public transportation.

- Letters offering case management services in several counties did not describe those services or their benefits.

Sometimes case managers exhibited imagination and initiative in attempting to engage prospective clients in Learnfare case management. In other cases, effort and attentiveness appeared to be lacking. In six counties, policies required additional offers in the form of telephone calls or home visits, although only two of these policies were in operation throughout the study period. On a few occasions, we saw evidence or heard reports of case managers using other methods to arrange an initial meeting with a prospective client, such as arranging a joint meeting with school or economic support specialists.

In two counties, Brown and Milwaukee, case managers were required to attempt visiting potential clients at their homes. In Milwaukee County, where case managers were involved in the presanction process, offers of case management were also made in person during meetings with families contesting their presanction notices.

Counties also varied in their policies and practices regarding the number of case management offers to be made. Seven of the eight counties whose policies emphasized individual offers required case managers to make two or more offers before stopping their efforts because of a family's lack of response. However, in no county were these policies consistently followed throughout the study period. In several counties, the policies were amended during the study period; in other counties, turnover among case managers either increased or decreased the number of offers routinely made. We also observed numerous instances of offers ceasing after one attempt at contact. In at least one case, the case manager ceased making offers when the first letter was returned because of an incorrect address, without apparently attempting to obtain a current address from the county economic support unit. In another case, we observed a year-old note from an outgoing case manager instructing the next case manager to arrange a home visit to offer services; none was documented. In Racine County, the number of offers made varies even within individual case managers' files, reflecting the flexibility allowed to case managers in the contracted agency.

Some methods or approaches to offering case management services appear more likely to be effective than others. Among the more successful approaches we observed were:

- making up to nine efforts to contact families, using mail, telephone, and face-to-face contact;

- persistence in obtaining new telephone numbers and addresses as potential clients moved from one residence to another;

- offering small financial incentives to participate, such as a $5 incentive payment to clients who attend motivational classes in Racine County;

- making offers to both parents and teenagers, rather than exclusively to either the case head or the teenager; and

- combining offers of case management with other services the client receives, such as by coordinating a meeting with the school or the client's economic support worker.

Although some of these approaches appear to be worth trying in nearly every case, we are hesitant to recommend that either the Department or local agencies adopt rigid policies requiring any of these approaches for two reasons. First, the decision regarding which approaches to use with which clients is one that is probably best made on a case-by-case basis. Case managers with whom we spoke expressed well-developed ideas about the different approaches they might use in different situations.

Second, any requirements that case managers make, for example, a certain number of offers in a certain form are not likely to improve response rates directly. Such requirements carry a risk that the job of case management will be defined for the case managers and their agencies as carrying out the process of making offers, rather than as obtaining the result of getting acceptances. Instead, the Department could encourage or require the counties to institute accountability measures that rely on case management acceptances rather than the number of offers made, and leave decisions regarding how many offers of what kind to make to which clients with the case managers themselves.

Among the ten counties in our study, Our Lady of Charity, Inc. Family Programs, the case management agency contracted to provide Learnfare services for Brown County, appeared superior in the flexibility with which staff approached the task of making offers and the assertiveness with which those offers were made. The reimbursement formula included in the contract between this agency and Brown County is based on the amount and type of contact the agency has with each client. This clearly communicates the desired product—assessments and service plans—in a way that many other contracts do not.

Reasons for Low Response to Service Offers

Other explanations for the low response rate offered by county staff and others focus on three general areas. First, truant teenagers and their families frequently are already involved in services related to the truancy problem or other family problems when the offer of Learnfare case management is made. Second, characteristics and experiences of the Learnfare case management population make that population particularly resistant to offers of such services. Third, the time that elapses between the month in which a teenager's attendance is poor enough to warrant a Learnfare sanction and the month in which the sanction is actually imposed and a meaningful offer of case management services is made makes it difficult for clients to perceive the relationship between poor attendance and offered services. Some counties have, however, been more successful than others in overcoming these problems.

Pre-Existing Services

Some potential clients may fail to respond to case management offers because they are already receiving services very similar to those the Learnfare case manager would provide. Because access to day care services and transportation were established in the Learnfare program before the introduction of case management services, referral of teenagers to these services is sometimes handled routinely, outside any formal case management arrangement. Staff in Brown, Douglas, Milwaukee, and Sheboygan counties specifically mentioned the routine provision of these services to Learnfare teenagers who require them as a factor that decreased the demand for case management.

In addition, because Learnfare sanctions do not take effect until a teenager has an attendance problem more serious than one that would make him or her subject to both truancy laws and most schools' children-at-risk programs, theoretically all Learnfare-sanctioned teenagers should be getting attendance-related services before they are sanctioned. Evidence from several counties in which case managers check for pre-existing services before extending individual offers, or which have well-developed programs serving habitual truants or children at risk of dropping out of school, indicates that participation in such services may reduce interest in Learnfare case management.

In Sheboygan County, Learnfare case managers routinely ascertain whether clients are receiving other, similar services before offering Learnfare case management. Of the 59 AFDC teenagers in Sheboygan County who were reported to have poor attendance for Learnfare purposes, 29, or 49.2 percent, were already receiving social services, mostly truancy-related, by the time an attendance problem was identified for Learnfare purposes.

In most other counties, it is difficult to tell to what extent pre-existing services are a factor in the lack of response to Learnfare case management because case managers do not attempt to determine whether the clients are already receiving services before extending individual offers of Learnfare case management. Winnebago County reported that it received no requests for Learnfare case management during the 1992-93 school year. At our request, staff of the Oshkosh School District, the largest in Winnebago County, reviewed a list of the 31 teenagers who were enrolled in that school district and subject to Learnfare sanctions during that same period: the staff reported that 17, or 54.8 percent, were receiving attendance-related services from the school district.

However, the existence of pre-existing services does not necessarily indicate that Learnfare case management services are not needed. The fact that the teenager currently has an attendance problem in spite of having participated in attendance-related services may indicate that the family needs additional or alternative services.

To ensure that attendance problems are addressed when services are being provided outside of Learnfare case management, those responsible for making case management offers need to determine a family's involvement in school- or court-related truancy programs. This would allow the case manager to inform the family's current social service provider of the family's Learnfare situation, so attendance problems and potential sanctions can be taken into account. Alternatively, if the family's existing social services case does not address the teenager's attendance problems, the Learnfare case manager could obtain relevant information about the family to improve and coordinate additional Learnfare services provided.

If an existing case is addressing attendance problems, the Learnfare case manager could concentrate intake efforts on other families who are not currently participating in any supportive service programs. In Sheboygan County, where families who are not already engaged in truancy-related social services do not receive individual offers of Learnfare case management, 5 of the 14 offers made during our study period were accepted, which is among the highest rates of acceptance we observed.

Resistance to Social Services

Another reason for the low response to offers of Learnfare case management, frequently cited by both case managers and clients, is that families are predisposed to refuse services. Case managers cited disorganization and disruption in sanctioned families, who are frequently responding to other crises and who may not believe they have time or energy for the services offered by the case manager. Such families often have a history of involvement with various social service providers and may be skeptical that additional service will be worthwhile. Case managers in several counties noted that the parents of Learnfare teenagers are likely to be Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) program participants, already involved in case management through that program and unwilling to establish a new relationship with another case manager. Families who have accepted services in the past may be pessimistic that additional services will help.

A repeatedly cited reason for the low response rates is that many sanctioned teenagers and their families are so alienated from school that they have no interest in returning and are not, therefore, interested in services intended to promote school attendance. In group interviews, teenagers expressed strong dissatisfaction with their schools for reasons ranging from physical safety concerns to teachers' attitudes regarding teenage parents. Among the few files in which the reasons for a client's active refusal of services was noted, dissatisfaction with school was the most frequently cited reason. If case managers did succeed in obtaining these teenagers' participation in case management they were usually able to arrange alternative education, including preparation for the certificate of General Educational Development (GED) for the older teenagers, but poor experience with school appears to present a barrier to acceptance of case management.

When case managers were asked about the reasons for clients' acceptance of case management, their responses were also related to the families' attitudes and attributes. Clients may come in, we were told, when a crisis or a change in circumstances forces or allows them to change behavior patterns. This sometimes includes the beginning of Learnfare sanction, as well as events such as the departure or return of a family member or the enrollment of a friend of the teenager in case management services. However, some case managers believe that repeated offers of services made several times during the year increase the likelihood that the family will contact the service provider when such an event occurs.

The Learnfare sanction itself—the reduction in a family's AFDC grant—was cited as a reason for both acceptance and refusal of case management services. Those staff and clients who cited the sanction as a reason for acceptance of services stated that on occasion, it has provided the impetus for a family to alter its behavior and to get help in doing so. Those who cited the sanction as a reason why families would not accept Learnfare case management cited the crises, such as loss of an apartment, that might ensue from a loss of income and make a disorganized, dysfunctional family even more so. Neither explanation could be supported or disproved by the files we reviewed because events were documented to the extent that causation could be inferred in only a very small number of files.

Other barriers to accepting case management services include:

- Potential clients not understanding the need to improve attendance—Some Learnfare families and teenagers do not know the basic rules of the Learnfare program, including the fact that school attendance is related to the amount of the monthly grant. Offers of service to such families may not be understood.

- Offers being directed to unresponsive family members—Professionals state that it is not always clear to whom in a dysfunctional family offers of services should be extended. For example, a teenager may be unresponsive and out of the control of the parent who is willing to accept services. Alternatively, a parent may be incapacitated by alcohol or other problems when the teenager would be willing to participate.

- Teenagers' unwillingness to attend school regardless of sanction—Some teenage mothers, for example, did not want to leave their infants in another's care even to attend school.

Although families' attributes and attitudes may be a significant barrier to their accepting case management services, some would argue that the purpose of Learnfare case management is to determine and overcome the reasons for any reluctance to participate. Others argue that case managers must employ selectivity, so that their efforts are best spent on those who are currently receptive. However, the fact that Learnfare families are likely to include a high proportion of troubled, distracted families requires that case management offers to them be clear and inviting and made in a relatively assertive fashion.

Timeliness

Finally, if offers of case management services are to be effective, they need to be made as soon as possible after an attendance problem is noticed. The current system of offering case management services succeeds in delivering offers of services to families in a timely manner if timeliness is measured from the date at which the reported poor attendance is noted on their AFDC records. However, poor attendance is routinely noted by AFDC staff only once every six months for ongoing cases, at eligibility reviews that examine attendance in the semester most recently completed. The teenager's Learnfare status can be changed to reflect poor attendance as soon as 1 month or as long as 11 months following the development of the attendance problem.

A teenager's attendance problem might be identified in the month following poor attendance, if a January review discloses an attendance problem that developed at the end of the previous semester, in December. However, it is also possible that a teenager might have developed an attendance problem in January, the first month of a new semester. If the school year ended in June and the family's six-month reviews were scheduled in May and November, the poor attendance in January would not result in monthly attendance monitoring until the November review.

In most counties, if a teenager's attendance continues to be poor after monthly attendance monitoring is initiated, the family is notified relatively promptly through the presanction process. However, in Milwaukee County, unique requirements delay this process for several more months.

As noted, because of the stipulated settlement in the *Kronquist* case, the process of identifying teenagers for sanctions requires at least four months when teenagers are enrolled in Milwaukee Public Schools. Thus, if a Milwaukee Public Schools teenager on monthly monitoring has three or more unexcused absences in January, his or her family's AFDC grant will not be sanctioned until April at the earliest. Only then will an individual offer of case management be made. If this family responds to case management services and the teenager's attendance improves, the family will still be sanctioned one month for each month of poor attendance, which, in this case, means it will take another four months before the family's grant is restored to its full amount.

Although staff in Milwaukee County are aware that the long elapsed time between poor attendance and Learnfare response is a deterrent to families' participation in case management, they also expressed a reluctance to amend or supplement the existing process in any way that might contradict the provisions in the *Kronquist* stipulation. State officials are in the best position to clarify any changes that could be made. Among alternatives to consider in Milwaukee County are extending individual offers of case management to all teenagers who are placed on monthly monitoring, or enclosing individual offers of case management services with the mailed presanction notice. While either alternative may result in additional cases needing assessment, funding is available because the 1993-95 Biennial Budget Act, which required that offers of case management services be made to those monitored monthly, also provided additional funds for such services.

The Governor's 1993-95 Biennial Budget proposed shortening the time before initiating both the sanction and the case management process by changing the basis of sanctions to the statutory definition of habitual truancy, rather than the current two-stage basis of poor prior-semester attendance followed by a month of three or more unexcused absences. The change was not adopted by the Legislature.

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CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Once clients accepted case management services, the content and quality of the services provided varied among counties, over time, and among case managers. As described in the federal waiver and in policy documents issued by the Department, case management services were expected to include three components: 1) a family assessment to identify the causes of the attendance problem; 2) a family service plan to identify the actions needed and services required to correct the problem; and 3) assistance in implementing the plan and monitoring the family's progress.

Family Assessments

The first step in Learnfare case management is assessing family needs. Case managers are expected to review the issues related to the teenager's ability to attend school. The *Kronquist* stipulation directs that their assessments address:

- the teenager's educational performance, including the demonstrated need for special or remedial education;
- child-care needs;
- transportation problems;
- juvenile or criminal court contacts by any family member;
- medical or health problems of any family member, including alcohol and other drug abuse; and
- basic living needs such as housing, heat, water, and food.

In our review, we identified 14 areas, listed in Table 5, in which we expected case managers to identify teenagers' or families' needs.

Table 5

Client Needs to Be Assessed

1. **Child care** for the teenagers' infants and preschool children while the teenagers attend school
2. **Transportation** of the teenagers' children to day care, the teenagers to school, or both
3. **Alternative education** for those teenagers who are unable to adapt to or benefit from regular high school classes
4. **Tutoring and other academic services** for those teenagers who need additional help, regardless of their need for alternative education
5. **Affiliation/motivation** for those teenagers who are so alienated that preparatory activities, such as involvement with peer groups or recreational activities, will be required to increase their ability or willingness to accept supportive services
6. **Advocacy and intervention** for those teenagers who need assistance in coping with other agencies or authorities, such as landlords or day care providers
7. **Student physical health** problems
8. **Family physical health** problems
9. **Student counseling** problems
10. **Family counseling** problems
11. **Student alcohol and other drug abuse** problems
12. **Family alcohol and other drug abuse** problems
13. **Lack of tangible items**, such as clothing for school or infant-care items
14. **Miscellaneous** other needs, of which the most frequently cited was supervision

As noted, the Department's policy documents suggest that case managers might identify a need for referral to other resources for evaluation of specific concerns, such as possible health problems, abuse or neglect situations, or substance abuse. In addition, we looked for reasonable efforts to identify the causes of a teenagers' attendance problems, including:

- efforts to ascertain with what other services the teenager and family have been involved, by contacting other social service professionals with whom the family may have had contact;

- efforts to determine what action has been taken by the school at which the teenager is or was enrolled to correct the truancy problems, and whether particular educational needs have been identified and addressed; and

- efforts to involve several members of the family, not just the teenager or parent alone, in the assessment, as well as visiting the family's home.

The most thorough assessments we observed were not Learnfare assessments. Eau Claire County provided these assessments in the course of truancy-related programs and social services other than Learnfare; Eau Claire County performed no Learnfare assessments. However, an approximate indicator of the thoroughness of the other assessments performed in Eau Claire County is the number and range of needs identified for the teenagers and their families. Using our list of 14 areas of potential need, we found each Eau Claire County assessment identified an average of 3.8 needs, in comparison to an average of 2.4 needs per case in all other counties. Needs were identified in 13 of the 14 areas considered: the single need that was not identified for any teenager in an Eau Claire County assessment was affiliation. In addition, Eau Claire County assessments provided evidence that the case manager had considered the educational, social, psychological, medical, and daily living skills of the family; routinely addressed needs both of parents and of teenagers; consulted with several professionals; and routinely updated assessments every six months.

The most thorough Learnfare case management assessments were observed in Kenosha and Sheboygan counties. In Kenosha County, Learnfare case managers frequently conducted structured interviews in the family's home and consulted with school officials, and they routinely consulted with other providers in a network known as the "Prevention Services Network." During the study period, an average of 3.3 needs were identified for each case, in 12 of the 14 areas in which we expected case managers to find needs. (No Kenosha County assessment identified family alcohol and drug problems or any need for advocacy.) The most frequently identified needs were child care (in 14 cases), student counseling (14 cases), and family counseling (13 cases).

In Sheboygan County, Learnfare case management assessments were performed by a county social worker who also has responsibility for court-ordered social services related to truancy matters. Learnfare assessments were conducted after a review of county social service records for the family and consisted of a comprehensive interview conducted with the family at home. An average of 2.4 needs per case were identified in the five Learnfare assessments performed during the study period. An additional 18 of the 54 remaining Learnfare teenagers for whom we requested records received comprehensive assessments through social services other than Learnfare. In all 23 assessments, the most frequently identified needs were supervision, alternative education, and student and family counseling.

In three counties, Learnfare assessments are routinely based exclusively upon a single face-to-face meeting with the teenager or the family. Case managers in Racine County conduct a structured interview in the agency's office, most typically with the teenager alone. Although the county's annual plan filed with the Department states that school district "at-risk coordinators . . . work closely with the Learnfare case management staff to address academic needs and identify educational alternatives and options," we found no evidence of such cooperation in our file review, and case managers stated the belief that school district staff are too busy to assist them in any substantial way beyond providing attendance information. In Racine County, an average of 2.7 needs were identified in each case, in ten areas of need. Affiliation was the most frequently identified need, cited in 13 of the 21 cases: these teenagers were referred to the agency's motivation classes. Alternative education, tutoring and other academic assistance, and student counseling were identified in nine cases each.

In Milwaukee County, we found 26 files in a sample of 200 containing evidence of an assessment prepared by the counties' contracted Learnfare case management agency, Wee Care Day Care Nursery Centers, Inc. An average of 1.4 needs were identified per case in 11 of the 14 areas. The most frequently identified need was alternative education (in 14 cases), followed by child care (7 cases), and advocacy (6 cases).

Learnfare assessments in Milwaukee County usually consisted of a single interview conducted with the teenager and a parent during a home visit. Although Wee Care case managers are trained to do a standard assessment interview, required documentation does not contain any detailed information about the family. Therefore, it is not possible to determine the thoroughness of case managers' interviews, and information is unavailable to the agency or to subsequent case managers. Wee Care case managers do not attempt to gather information from any sources other than the family interview; before May 1992 they could, however, refer teenagers from Milwaukee Public Schools to the school district for assessment of educational needs.

In Dane County, Learnfare case management assessments were handled inconsistently over the study period: some cases contained very minimal assessments, while others were more thorough. Over the study period, the contracted provider, the Urban League of Greater Madison, Inc., employed three different case managers and because neither the county nor the contracted provider had provided substantive written guidance, performance of case management assessments varied significantly.

In two counties, Brown and Rock, Learnfare assessments changed substantially during or after our study period. Brown County assessments during the first portion of our study period appeared superficial and were documented with brief handwritten notes from informal interviews with clients. However, in late spring 1993, a new case manager began to perform more rigorous assessments, which include a structured interview with the family at home and consultation with school officials.

In Rock County, Learnfare case management documentation was minimal during the period of our study: we inferred the existence of three assessments from notes of informal conversations with clients, and the associated service plans noted only that the clients should return to school. Since the study period, Rock County has adopted more thorough procedures for assessment and documentation.

In the two remaining counties, Douglas and Winnebago, we observed little or no Learnfare case management assessment activity. In Douglas County, only three clients, two of whom were married to each other, received case management services. Staff explained that the volume of clients interested in Learnfare case management is small, and their situations are usually known to county social service providers, so that most assessments can be handled informally. No Learnfare case management assessments were performed in Winnebago County during the study period.

There appear to be at least two reasons for the relatively inactive approach to Learnfare case management assessments in most counties. First, at least one county made a policy decision to perform assessments without consultation with other professionals. Staff of the contracted case management agency in Racine County, Opportunity Industrialization Center of Racine, Inc. (OIC), explained that their approach to case management involves first building trust with the teenager, so that less-threatening service needs can be identified. This approach has been taken because Learnfare case management is optional for clients, unlike truancy-enforcement actions, which attach the authority of the court, or JOBS program case management efforts, in which participation is required of certain AFDC recipients. Case managers in Racine County do not wish to adopt too assertive an approach to assessments because they believe it will cause participation in case management services to decline.

Second, in other counties, case managers were generally responsible for developing their own methods of assessing Learnfare families' needs because the Department issued limited written guidance concerning methods of conducting Learnfare case management assessments, and few counties or their contracted agencies have adopted written guidance, expectations, or policies. Most counties appear to have simply passed along the Department's minimal instructions to their contracted providers. Although federal guidance, repeated in state documents, notes that Learnfare case management assessments may identify the need for additional assessment in other areas, we saw only a few instances in one county in which a Learnfare case manager recommended that the client obtain additional assessment from another professional.

The Department's draft *Learnfare Case Management Manual* contains useful guidance not previously distributed in written form, such as recommendations that the assessment involve all family members, take place in the clients' homes, and be updated regularly with the clients' progress. Additional departmental guidance, such as review and comment on the assessment procedures described in the counties' annual plans and contracts with service providers, could help to ensure that counties implement more thorough assessment practices.

Service Plans

Federal and department officials have issued more guidance on Learnfare case management service plans than on either offering services or family assessments. A November 1990 memorandum from the Department to county AFDC officials stated:

> The [service] plan should include desired behavioral outcomes and the services the [clients] must participate in to achieve the outcomes. In all instances, if a service to which the [clients] have been referred is not available without a substantial waiting period, the case manager will attempt to identify an appropriate alternative.

Case managers have also been directed to submit exception reports to the Department whenever Learnfare clients cannot obtain services prescribed in a service plan within 30 days, and no acceptable alternative can be found. Such reports are expected to serve as indicators of areas in which additional services need to be developed for Learnfare teenagers.

We were able to observe functional Learnfare service plans in only five of the ten counties we evaluated: Brown, Kenosha, Milwaukee, Racine, and Sheboygan. As previously noted, no Learnfare case management assessments were performed in Eau Claire or Winnebago counties, and documented service plans in Rock and Douglas counties were perfunctory during the period of our study. In Dane County, functional service plans existed for Learnfare teenagers who already had cases with the contracted case management agency because they were school-age parents before they were referred under Learnfare. However, the Dane County cases in our sample initiated because of Learnfare status received no referrals to outside service providers.

Service plans do not necessarily reflect all the assistance provided to clients since, as previously noted, many clients come to Learnfare case management already having been provided child care and transportation. In addition, notes in several cases documented assistance provided directly by Learnfare case managers, who interceded with day care providers, schools, or other authorities to resolve difficulties clients were having with services they were already receiving, and in some cases provided direct assistance through their own agencies. For example, the Urban League of Greater Madison supplied a Dane County family with an alarm clock and provided informal monitoring and encouragement to teenagers. Although direct services provided by the case manager are occasionally noted in the service plan, it appears to be general practice to provide them without documentation.

There are several reasons for the limited scope of Learnfare case management service plans. In some counties, at some times, service plans were apparently limited by design: referrals to outside services were so rare that it appeared case managers considered their roles to be primarily counselor or intake worker for the contracted case management agency's own services. For example, in Racine County, where it is county policy for the case management agency to perform assessments without outside professional consultation, the practice of limiting service plans to the case management agency's capabilities also appeared to be most pronounced: of the 21 assessments we observed, only 4 resulted in referrals to services not provided by OIC, other than child day care and transportation. The trust-building approach used by Racine County case managers is also reflected in its services plans: 13 of the 17 completed referred teenagers to the contracted agency's social-recreational program, which case managers reportedly rely on to build trusting relationships. However, in none of these cases were assessments or service plans later updated to include services intended to deal with more serious problems.

In other cases, it appears that the quality of service plans is limited by the scope of the assessment. In both Racine and Milwaukee counties, where assessments are based solely on interviews with clients and do not include consultation with other professionals, service plans are functionally limited to services requested by a client. The relative infrequency of referrals for substance abuse may illustrate the effect of this approach: among the 47 assessments we observed in these two counties, only

1 contained evidence that an alcohol or drug abuse problem had been noted, and this was not included in the formal assessment record or service plan.

In addition, although approximately 40 percent of the service plans we observed prescribed alternative education, we question the extent to which Learnfare case managers can adequately make such referrals, especially without consultation with school guidance staff who may have worked with the family. For example, in Milwaukee County, case managers described a process in which referrals to alternative education placements were based largely upon the teenagers' expressed preferences, rather than on any assessment of need or suitability of placement. Because Milwaukee Public Schools, in May 1992, eliminated its centralized educational needs assessment services, no reliable source of such assessments or referrals to appropriate alternative schools is currently available until after teenagers have enrolled at alternative schools.

Federal and state guidance regarding Learnfare case management appears to have anticipated that formal exception reports of unavailable services, filed by Learnfare case managers, would provide a useful indication of areas in which additional supportive services need to be developed for Learnfare teenagers. For several reasons, we do not believe that such reports have in the past, or will in the foreseeable future, provide such information.

First, Learnfare case managers in most counties are not now creating service plans in sufficient number or with sufficient thoroughness to provide an indication of necessary services. Second, the nature of the case management process when performed well is incompatible with the process set forth for the filing of exception reports.

Case managers have received instructions to complete exception reports and submit them to the Department whenever a Learnfare client is unable to obtain services prescribed in a service plan within 30 days of the service referral having been made, if no acceptable alternative can be found. Although we encountered some case managers who did not appear to be aware of this requirement, case managers in counties that created service plans as part of their case management services were aware of the requirement.

However, recent guidance from the Department directs that service plans be developed with the family and include "short term objectives [that are] quickly achievable, allowing the teen to experience regular successes." Both widely accepted social services practice and case managers with whom we spoke want to make service plans as quickly achievable as possible for the client's psychological benefit. Given this approach to client services, case managers expressed a strong resistance, if not outright refusal, to include services that a client could not readily obtain. In two counties, we observed evidence in three files that case managers had perceived a need for certain educational services the schools were unable to provide promptly, but because these service needs were not noted in the service plan, no exception reports were filed.

Finally, although we found no evidence that case managers have been discouraged from filing exception reports, case managers are aware that filing such reports will cause administrative difficulties for themselves and their agencies by provoking management reviews of service needs and availability. This awareness operates as an additional disincentive to including unavailable services in the clients' service plans and reduces the value of exception reports as a reliable indicator of gaps in service availability.

Follow-Up and Monitoring

Once service plans are developed and referrals to services made, case managers need to follow up with clients to ensure that the services are actually being provided and meeting their needs and to periodically reassess their service needs. Among the five counties that created substantive service plans for their Learnfare case management clients, we observed only one, Sheboygan, in which the required referrals for services were consistently made in an effective manner, and in which routine follow-up with regard to the clients' progress consistently occurred.

In Sheboygan County, we observed five service plans. For older teenagers, the Learnfare case manager would, on occasion, recommend that a client contact a service provider by himself or herself; however, the case manager would on other occasions contact the provider of the recommended service on behalf of the client to set up an appointment, or in other ways ensure that services were initiated. In addition, Sheboygan County has adopted a relatively thorough client monitoring form, on which the case manager documents services provided and the clients' progress after the referrals are made, until each case is closed.

As with other aspects of case management in Brown County, cases we reviewed from the earlier part of our study period contained little evidence of significant activity. However, in the two cases initiated after March 1993 under a new case manager, files provided evidence that referrals to services are made in an effective manner. In addition, the case manager contacts active cases every four to six weeks to ask whether services were useful. Although the contract under which the current Brown County case manager operates contains a provision limiting follow-up contacts to five hours per family unless prior county approval is obtained, this did not appear to have artificially limited follow-up in the cases we observed.

In Milwaukee County, we did not observe evidence of aggressive referral to services. In the 26 cases in our sample for which service needs were identified, case managers frequently provided clients with sufficient information to contact service providers, but there was little evidence in the files that case managers had taken assertive action to ensure that contact took place. Wee Care case management staff in Milwaukee County believe that poor documentation practices, rather than the absence of aggressive referrals, explains the lack of evidence in the case records. Case management procedures in Milwaukee County require case managers to monitor open cases at least once every 30 days, and to record case updates. We observed such updates in half the cases.

In the cases we observed in Kenosha County, referrals for services appear to be consistently handled in an effective manner, as a result of well-developed referral procedures among an organized network of service providers. Kenosha County appears to have created adequate procedures for continuing contact with the clients at least once every 30 days, and in several cases we observed an exceptional level of effort to ensure that clients were referred to additional or alternative services when the original referral was less than satisfactory for the client. However, reliable execution of these procedures was limited by a high rate of turnover among case managers during the study period.

In the 21 Racine County cases for which we observed that plans had been adopted, referrals for service and continuing contact with clients were not well-documented. Case managers attributed this to poor documentation practices rather than lack of activity. However, case managers also reported that their post-referral monitoring activities consisted largely of monitoring the clients' school attendance reports, rather than contacting clients to determine whether services were satisfactory and effective.

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BARRIERS TO LEARNFARE CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

In each of the ten counties we studied, all teenagers who were reported to have attendance problems, and their families, were notified of the availability of case management services and given information on how to contact case managers. This notification occurred shortly before or after any poor attendance reports had been recorded in relation to their AFDC grants. In addition, in nine of the ten counties, families who requested case management services were able to meet with a case manager to discuss their needs. Therefore, there appear to be few absolute barriers to motivated families who wished to receive case management services.

However, the proportion of families in the counties' target populations who eventually received assessments during our study period was low, and the quality of services offered to families who did respond was inconsistent. In addition to less-than-effective offers of case management services in some counties, there appear to be two causes for these shortcomings:

- Learnfare case managers in most counties were not actively coordinating assessments, service plans, and services with other agencies, including the schools; and

- program officials at the state level and in most counties provided inadequate guidance to case managers on case management goals or methods.

Coordination with the Schools

As noted, most Learnfare case management assessments we observed appeared to have been completed using information provided solely by clients. In only a few instances did we observe evidence of consultation between the case manager and any other professional who was involved with the family, or evidence that the case manager had referred the family to other professionals for assessments. While the absence of referrals for assessment of alcohol and drug abuse problems or family mental health is itself questionable, the rarity with which school officials appear to be involved in Learnfare case management assessments and service planning must be considered unacceptable.

Because Learnfare attendance requirements are more lenient than those set forth in the State's habitual truancy statutes, any Learnfare teenager who is subject to monthly monitoring or sanction also meets the statutory definition of a "habitual truant." Although some transient AFDC teenagers who have never attended school in their current counties would not be known to the local school districts, it could be argued that Learnfare case managers, at least in the cases of teenagers who have attended school locally, should take steps to determine whether the students' schools have followed statutory requirements for identifying and addressing truancy problems.

These steps are quite similar to the services intended to be provided as Learnfare case management and include:

- attempting to meet with a parent to discuss the truancy;
- providing an opportunity for educational counseling to determine whether a change in curriculum would resolve the student's truancy, and considering curriculum modifications such as work study or alternative school, which might address the student's needs;
- evaluating the student to determine whether learning problems may be a cause of the truancy and, if so, taking steps to overcome these learning problems; and
- conducting an evaluation to determine whether social problems may be a cause of truancy and, if so, taking appropriate action or making appropriate referrals.

Beyond this, contact with the schools is necessary for the quality of the Learnfare case management itself. Educational problems such as learning disabilities frequently lead to truancy. Because Learnfare case managers are rarely qualified to evaluate these problems, they must be able to refer clients to the schools. In some instances, Learnfare case managers might be able to refer the entire case to the school, while in others they could consider the school staff's observations and recommendations in the Learnfare assessments and service plans.

In a few counties, we found some evidence that Learnfare case managers were contacting school officials regarding assessment of attendance problems and arranging services to address them. For example, in several cases we observed, the Brown County case manager arranged meetings between school officials and the Learnfare family to develop alternative attendance schedules or class assignments to address the teenager's attendance problem. The case manager in Douglas County reported receiving cooperation from school officials when their assistance was requested, but such contact was not routine. Racine County case managers have frequent contact with schools regarding attendance information, although they reported that substantive contact regarding the teenager's educational needs was not a part of their case management services.

Before our study period, the Department's written guidance to the counties had indicated that coordination of Learnfare case management with school services was advisable. Counties receiving state funding for case management activities, for example, had been informed that annual plans for the delivery of case management services should be "developed in coordination with school districts located in the county" and had been directed to describe in those plans "the linkage and coordination with the public school districts." In addition, a memorandum issued by the Department in 1990 included a statement that family assistance "will consist of assuring access to those services [that] may include . . . working with the school's 'Children at Risk' coordinator, counselors, attendance officers, principals, and teachers to address attendance and education problems."

The Department's draft *Learnfare Case Management Manual* states the need for coordination with teenagers' schools more emphatically:

> Coordination with the appropriate staff at the school . . . is absolutely necessary to ensure that appropriate services are provided to the teen and his or her family and that there is no duplication of services.

In addition, the manual contains information about the State's children-at-risk program and instructs case managers to familiarize themselves with the operation of such programs in their local schools.

Learnfare case managers with whom we discussed the possibility all agreed that increased coordination with the schools would be beneficial. However, several expressed pessimism that a significant amount of cooperation, beyond the exchange of enrollment and attendance information, was feasible. Milwaukee County staff were perhaps the most pessimistic, citing difficulty in locating any school staff who would have useful knowledge of a truant teenager and his or her problems. Other difficulties cited, in Milwaukee County and elsewhere, were that school staff would refuse to share information on confidentiality grounds, that school officials would not have the time to work with Learnfare case managers, and that some school officials maintain a negative attitude toward Learnfare activities. Finally, case managers in several counties believe that some school officials do not want truant teenagers and their problems to return to school and are, therefore, reluctant to participate in efforts to assist that return.

While these concerns may be valid in some cases, or in some counties, the attendance issues that Learnfare case management services are intended to address are inextricably related to assessments and services that only school officials are fully qualified to deliver. If it is true that school officials either cannot or will not provide the assessments and services the truant teenagers need, this fact should be documented in the Learnfare service plans as an unavailable service, for which exception reports could appropriately be filed. However, the extent to which schools do or do not deliver these services cannot be determined unless Learnfare case managers routinely request information about the services and begin to act as advocates for the truant teenagers with their school districts.

The draft *Learnfare Case Management Manual* represents a significant clarification of the Department's guidance for the counties. However, based upon our observations of the difficulties Learnfare case managers will likely have in implementation, we believe that the Department will have to closely monitor the counties' efforts to implement this guidance and may need to issue additional instructions.

Implementation of Case Management

During the period we studied, the guidance and oversight provided by the Department and the counties had not been sufficient to ensure that case management services were fully developed for three reasons. First, both state and county officials indicated that their Learnfare efforts have been overwhelmingly dedicated to developing, implementing, and refining presanction procedures to comply with the *Kronquist* stipulation because failure to do so will again risk a court injunction halting the

Learnfare program. Providing case management offers, assessments, and support services was, at best, a second priority.

Second, the Department allowed counties to develop their own methods for providing case management services, so that counties would have the flexibility to create systems most suited to local needs. Because of the varying degrees to which other truancy-related programs had been developed among the counties, this was probably an appropriate initial strategy. However, when the State set no specific expectations for the methods to be used and provided limited guidance, most counties did not establish goals or develop service delivery methods on their own.

Third, the written guidance that was provided by the Department concentrated on the presanction process and was of limited usefulness to case managers or their supervisors because it was poorly organized and stressed procedures to be followed rather than goals to be achieved. Most counties did no more than pass this material on to case managers and did little to hold contracted agencies accountable for success. The Department's staff did conduct Learnfare training sessions or make conference presentations throughout the state on at least 16 occasions from 1990 through 1992, some of which appear to have described appropriate methods for conducting Learnfare assessments. However, because this guidance was not distributed statewide in written documents until the draft manual was made available in December 1993, its effects were limited.

Guidance Regarding Case Management

Counties were provided the terms and conditions of the federal Learnfare waiver, which defines case management as

> intervention concurrent with a Learnfare sanction for the purposes of assessing family needs, developing family service plans (or other plans of action) and assisting in the implementation of such plans for the purpose of furthering regular school attendance by the teenager

and lists its key elements—assessments, service plans, follow-up, and work with schools. This potentially useful information was included in one-half page of an 11-page document, written in largely technical language intended for state officials, that contains no index or other aid to finding a specific topic.

Counties also received copies of the 29-page *Kronquist* stipulation, which contained less than two pages of guidance on Learnfare case management. In addition to repeating the requirement for family assessments, the stipulation identifies a list of services typically needed by Learnfare families and includes requirements for documentation which, if noted by Learnfare case managers, would have appeared difficult, if not impossible, to follow. For example, the stipulation requires case managers to record "anticipated duration of services" and "estimated cost of services." Case managers with whom we spoke reported that such information would not be known to them at the time the family's service plan is written.

The third document, or set of documents, in which the Department distributed expectations for Learnfare case management to counties was a series of Administrators' Memoranda issued between November 1990 and September 1993 by the Division of Economic Support to local human service administrators at irregular intervals. These memoranda communicate a wide range of administrative issues, including funding, reporting, policy changes, and procedural requirements affecting numerous programs. The series in which Learnfare direction was given contains over 100 documents each year, although only one described substantively the services to be included in case management. The memoranda stress required case management procedures, such as documentation and exception reports, to a much greater extent than they explain the intended purpose or content of the services, and the tone and content are addressed to agency administrators. County service delivery staff do not appear to be generally familiar with these memoranda, and the case managers who were aware of them perceived them as largely irrelevant to their work.

Before and during our study period, counties also provided minimal direction to Learnfare case managers. The primary documents in which most counties set forth their Learnfare case management programs were annual case management plans, required by the Department of all counties receiving additional state case management funds. Many counties' plans simply reiterated the general guidance provided by the Department, while others included some county elaboration of principles and objectives. Contracted case management agencies were provided with little other substantive guidance and were generally left on their own to determine what services, at what level of effort, constituted appropriate Learnfare case management.

Where active truancy-related service systems are already in place, such as in Sheboygan and Eau Claire counties, it does not appear that a strong new system of Learnfare case management is needed. However, where truancy services have not been well developed, attitudes and the county's expectations for service providers may have inhibited effective development of Learnfare case management services. For example, in one county without active truancy enforcement, a social work supervisor questioned about his staff's efforts to determine whether schools were providing suitable services to Learnfare case management clients stated simply, "that is not our job."

State oversight of the counties and county oversight of their contracted case management agencies have also been minimal. Department staff confirmed that no counties had received substantive comments or suggestions regarding their annual case management plans. In no year did the Department determine an unduplicated number of teenagers with reported attendance problems, either prospectively for planning purposes or retrospectively for oversight purposes.

Oversight of Case Management

Legal Action of Wisconsin and the Department's joint reviews of Learnfare presanction procedures in eight of the ten counties in our evaluation did not include review of the policies, practices, substance, or quality of case management. Kenosha, Milwaukee, and Racine counties have made efforts to review the services delivered by their contracted case management agencies and, as a result, they have been able to provide these agencies with some direction regarding the delivery of services. For example, oversight by Milwaukee County officials prompted Wee Care to redistribute responsibility among its case managers in a way that increased the likelihood that case management services would be offered and delivered in an appropriate manner, and Racine County's efforts in working with OIC included compilation of the most extensive case management procedures manual in any county we observed. However, these counties are the exception. Most other counties' oversight consisted of relatively superficial review of caseload statistics and fiscal items.

Recent Developments in Case Management Planning

In emphasizing procedures, the Department has been responsive to legal requirements, but it has created a perception that providing case management services is a matter of meeting documentation requirements rather than achieving service goals. For example, some county staff with whom we spoke appeared to resist as irrelevant our questions regarding the effectiveness of their methods of offering case management. Instead, they framed the issue as one of their compliance with minimum requirements for making timely offers and for documentation. In one instance, when we attempted to initiate a discussion of potential methods for increasing response rates to offers of case management services, local staff questioned whether additional or earlier offers of service would contradict the terms of the *Kronquist* stipulation.

The *Learnfare Case Management Manual*, included in draft form as Appendix VI, will overcome apparent weaknesses of previous guidance in several ways.

- The manual is written in clear, non-technical language.
- It is organized in a logical fashion, with a table of contents and clearly titled subsections for easy reference.
- It places appropriate emphasis on the purpose and substance of case management services, although it does not neglect procedural requirements.

In addition, the manual usefully elaborates on the various elements of case management, such as offers, assessments, and service plans. For example, previous guidance documents stated that sanctioned teenagers and their families are to be given priority in the delivery of case management services, but they did not clearly identify which teenagers are eligible for services. The recently released manual clearly identifies which teenagers are and are not eligible for case management services before repeating the requirement that sanctioned teenagers are to be given priority.

Finally, whereas written guidance previously offered to county case managers on doing assessments was largely limited to suggested forms for documentation, the draft manual includes guidance such as:

> The most effective assessment tool is a series of personal appointments with the teen and his/her family in which you hear, see, and sense the teen's situation. You can learn who this person is, what strengths can be worked with, and what weaknesses must be compensated for.

Although the *Learnfare Case Management Manual* will be a significant improvement over previous guidance offered to the counties, the Department will need to continue making additional efforts to assist the counties in fully implementing this guidance. For example, the manual does not address issues such as the extent to which counties are expected to resume offers of service to families who have failed to respond in the past. In addition, as counties gain case management experience, the Department will need to disseminate information on what methods of offering services are most effective with which kinds of clients among all counties.

To ensure that the development of effective Learnfare case management services continues in the counties, the Department will need to:

- increase oversight activities, such as commenting on counties' annual plans, devising periodic monitoring reports that relate to the program's goals, and including the conduct of case management in the Department's site visit monitoring activities;

- take steps to ensure relevant, useful training is available to Learnfare case managers on a regular basis; and

- encourage sharing among the counties of successful methods for providing Learnfare case management.

We recommend the Department of Health and Social Services, beginning in June 1994, review county efforts to improve case management as a result of this report and that it require modifications to 1995 county case management plans if improvements are not made.

****

APPENDIX I

Methodology

Three general sources of information provided the basis for our findings:

1) review of state, local, and service agency documents relating to policy and procedure;

2) review of local service records of Learnfare teenagers eligible for case management services based on their status during the 1992-93 school year; and

3) interviews with state and local officials, service providers, and teenage participants in Learnfare programs.

Policies and Procedures

In addition to the terms and conditions of the federal waiver, which provided the basic requirements for Learnfare in Wisconsin, we obtained and reviewed other documents that have described and shaped case management services. These include:

- state statutes and administrative code pertaining to the Learnfare program;
- the "Stipulation for Final Judgment," entered in September 1992 by the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin for the civil action *Cheryl Kronquist, et. al.*, v. *Gerald Whitburn, et. al.;*
- Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Economic Support, Administrators' Memoranda relating to the Learnfare program, dated November 1990 through September 1993;
- annual plans for case management services submitted by funded counties for CYs 1991 through 1994;
- case management reports filed by the counties with the Department for the same time period;
- for Milwaukee County, the requests for proposal, proposals, and contracts relating to the delivery of case management services for CYs 1991 through 1994;
- other counties' contracts with Learnfare case management service providers and related reports and correspondence, where available;
- Learnfare case management procedures manuals, forms, and instructions in each county, where available;
- documents and correspondence relating to the Department's reviews of the counties' Learnfare programs, including results of compliance audits conducted jointly with Legal Action of Wisconsin, and the resulting corrective action plans and other related correspondence and reports; and

- training materials relating to Learnfare case management developed and used by the Department and by counties and local service agencies, where available.

Review of Learnfare Teenagers' Case Records

To determine the level of service being provided to Learnfare teenagers, we reviewed county records relating to Learnfare case management. The first step in this process was to identify Learnfare teenagers in each of the ten counties' target populations. Although all teenagers for whom Learnfare is mandatory are eligible for Learnfare case management services, no county routinely offers such services to Learnfare-mandatory teenagers for whom no attendance problems have been reported. Therefore, we did not include these teenagers in the population from which we selected cases.

The Department provided us with computer files containing information on all teenagers for whom the automated state AFDC records indicated a Learnfare status of:

- MO, or monthly monitoring, which indicates poor prior-semester attendance;

- SA, or sanction, which indicates poor prior-month attendance or dropout status, and a grant reduction; or

- any of the good-cause codes, which indicate that the teenager has established that he or she has an acceptable reason for not attending school, which may include being the caregiver parent of an infant under 45 days old, being expelled, or not having child care available.

For each benefit-month from September 1992 through May 1993, inclusive, the Department provided us with a computerized listing from which we created a combined list containing one record for each teenager, documenting a nine-month Learnfare status history. In our subsequent analyses and case file reviews, we treated each teenager whose name appeared on the combined list as a single case for the duration of the study period, rather than, for example, handling each reappearance of a single teenager on a monthly listing as a separate case. We believe that this treatment reflects the intended ongoing nature of the case management services.

With this information, we conducted analyses of the characteristics of the population of Learnfare teenagers referred for case management services. We analyzed age, gender, Learnfare status, and head-of-household status.

We selected our sample of cases to review from our list. Within the constraint that sanctioned teenagers are to be given priority, counties have been given the flexibility to identify a target population for Learnfare case management services. For most counties, no distinction is made between teenagers whose Learnfare status was "monitored," "sanctioned," or "good-cause"; in these counties, we selected cases to review from the entire population. In two counties, we limited the population from which we selected cases to the population the county has identified as being its target population. In Dane County, policy and practice is to extend individual offers of case management only to sanctioned teenagers, monitored 13- and 14-year-old teenagers, teenage parents, and pregnant teenagers. In Milwaukee County, individual offers of case management are extended only to sanctioned teenagers, although teenagers wishing to establish good cause for not attending school are also given an opportunity to meet with case managers and are routinely offered services in the event that they do. Therefore, in Milwaukee County we selected our sample of cases from sanctioned teenagers and teenagers with good cause.

In Douglas, Eau Claire, and Sheboygan counties, the entire population was small enough that we did not pick a sample, but reviewed all cases on the list. In all other counties except Milwaukee, we randomly selected 20 percent of the teenagers in the target population from our list. In Milwaukee County, we randomly selected 200 cases from the target population, or approximately 7.4 percent of the 2,712 teenagers who were recorded as either sanctioned or having good-cause reasons for not attending school.

In our visits to the counties, we requested case management records for the teenagers in our sample. In the review of files and records of both county agencies and contracted case management agencies, we attempted to determine:

- when the case was referred to the Learnfare case manager, what the teenager's Learnfare status was at that time, and whether the family had a pre-existing case with that agency;
- how often, when, and by what methods the teenager and his or her family were offered case management services;
- whether, when, and by whom a family assessment had been completed in the case, and what needs were identified;
- whether necessary services were identified, providers were identified, referrals were made, and services provided;
- the status of the case as of August 31, 1993: if open, whether it was still active as indicated by having activity within the month; if closed, for what reason at what time.

In addition, we recorded observations regarding qualitative aspects of attempts to contact the client; coordination with social service providers; the thoroughness and conduct of the assessment; and the referral to services, the level of activity with regard to follow-up, and other aspects of the services.

The rate at which Learnfare assessments were performed in these ten counties could not be calculated simply by dividing the number of assessments we found with the number of cases we reviewed, since the assessment rates in those counties for which we had information on all cases would be weighted more heavily than that for Milwaukee, where we had reviewed only 7.4 percent of the cases.

The ten counties were divided into three groups based on the number of Learnfare participants enrolled in each county. Milwaukee County was considered separately; the target population of 2,712 in that county accounts for 57.4 percent of the target population in all ten counties. A sample of 200 cases, which is statistically significant at a 90 percent confidence level and a sampling precision of plus or minus 7 percent, was randomly drawn from Milwaukee county's target population for this period. This allowed us to predict that 352.87 assessments would have been found had we reviewed all of Milwaukee's cases.

The second group consists of Douglas, Eau Claire, Sheboygan, and Winnebago counties, which had an average target population of 84 students each and accounted for 7.1 percent of the target population in the ten counties. Because of the relatively few students participating in Learnfare in these counties, we could obtain information regarding all 335 cases, and found 8 assessments.

The third group consists of Brown, Dane, Kenosha, Racine, and Rock counties, which had an average target population of 335 students and accounted for 35.5 percent of the ten counties' target population. The sample size in none of these counties alone was large enough to allow calculation of assessment rates statistically significant at a 90 percent confidence level and a sampling precision of plus or minus

7 percent. However, because sampled cases were distributed proportionally among the five counties within the strata based on 20 percent of the target populations (345 cases were randomly drawn from the 1,675 students participating in these counties), we could calculate such a rate for the group as a whole. This allowed us to predict that 305.87 assessments would have been found had all cases been reviewed.

An expected rate of assessment was calculated for each group by multiplying the rate of assessment experienced in the sample in each group by the number of students in each group's target population. The groups' numbers of expected assessments were summed to calculate the total of expected assessments, which was then divided by the total target population to obtain an overall assessment rate of 14.11 percent.

The adequacy of documentation of case management activities was a limitation whose effects on our conclusions cannot be determined. Some case managers kept precise records of their activities, while others kept minimal records or none at all. When we encountered files in which the record was ambiguous or non-existent, we attempted to question the responsible case managers, if they were available, to determine the extent to which undocumented services had taken place. Although in some instances case managers could recall the performance of specific activities, in most cases where we observed a lack of documentation, we had to conclude that no activity had taken place.

In Brown, Dane, Kenosha, Milwaukee, and Rock counties, we reviewed additional cases not in our random sample. Although these files were not included in our computations of case management activities, such as the rate at which counties perform assessments, we have relied upon these cases with regard to our qualitative observations.

The method of selecting cases for review was somewhat amended from that anticipated in the research design. In the design, it was anticipated that we would review 20 percent of the cases referred for case management services in each of Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee counties, and all cases receiving case management services in the remaining seven counties. After consultation with department staff, it was decided to depart from this method of selecting cases for two reasons.

First, the number of cases referred for case management in Kenosha, Racine and Milwaukee counties, as reflected on the month-end listings of teenagers with reported attendance problems during our study period, was much greater than anticipated. Instead of the 1,250 cases originally expected in those three counties, for which a 20 percent sample would have required review of 250 cases, we discovered that 6,965 teenagers appeared on that list at some time during our study period. A 20 percent sample, almost 1,400 cases, would have taken a prohibitive amount of review time. Therefore, it was decided to select 20 percent samples in Kenosha and Racine counties, and to limit the review of Milwaukee County cases to 200 sanctioned and good-cause cases, or 7.4 percent of the group referred to the contracted case management agency.

Second, in the remaining counties, limiting review to cases that had received case management services would not have allowed us to make observations regarding offers made to clients who did not eventually accept services, or observations regarding response rates. Therefore, cases were selected for review in the seven remaining counties using the same method anticipated for Kenosha, Milwaukee, and Racine counties.

Results of these reviews enabled us to examine:

- the extent to which Learnfare participants are actually receiving case management services;
- the timeliness with which administrative procedures, including attendance verification, determination of possible exemption for cause, and initial assessment, are performed;

- the types of support services identified in the assessment process as important for improving school attendance; and

- the types of support services actually provided and how these compare to those identified as needed.

One analysis anticipated in the research design was not included. The frequency with which teenagers receiving case management services are subject to initial sanction if their referrals occurred when they became subject to monthly monitoring, and the frequency with which they are subject to recurring sanctions if they are referred when they become subject to sanction, were not calculated for several reasons. If "referral to case management services" is judged to occur when the teenager's name appears on the monthly listing of teenagers with reported attendance problems, almost all teenagers are referred when they become subject to monthly monitoring; in only a few situations, such as when a teenager with no previous attendance problem drops out of school, do teenagers appear on this listing without having been subject to monthly monitoring. Any other definition of referral to case management would differ among the counties, so that comparison of the frequency with which the two groups experience sanctions would be confounded with the effects of the differing county systems. In addition, although we could obtain records of teenagers' Learnfare status at one point in each month during our study period, a teenager's Learnfare status on any given day, such as the day he or she was offered case management services, cannot be determined. Finally, since only a small proportion of teenagers eventually receive case management services, analyses of the frequency with which they experience sanctions after receiving case management would be of limited value.

Interviews with Case Management Staff and Participants

In the course of this evaluation, we interviewed state staff of the Department of Health and Social Services, the Department of Public Instruction, and the Legislative Fiscal Bureau. We interviewed county staff in all ten counties, including managers, supervisors, and line staff of both economic support and social services functions. We also interviewed administrative staff and case managers in contracted case management agencies, and staff of several school districts. Finally, we conducted group interviews of teenage participants in Learnfare case management.

In interviews with local staff, we explored questions identified as a result of our review of policy documents, procedures documents, and case records; communication methods between staff involved in the case management process and with clients; procedures used by the county to monitor case management services in order to identify and correct any problems; staff qualifications and training; and other issues. We solicited local staffs' comments both on the strengths and weaknesses of case management services and on support services available to Learnfare teenagers in their communities. Finally, we shared the draft report and the appropriate county profile with staff in each of the ten counties, to obtain their comments on our findings and conclusions.

In group interviews with Learnfare teenagers, we solicited comments on Learnfare in general, attempting to ascertain their level of understanding about the program; their reasons for not attending school; their reasons for accepting or rejecting offered services; and their perceptions of the quality and availability of supportive services in their communities. Because of limitations on our ability to control participation in these interview groups, the teenagers who participated were self-selecting and almost certainly more motivated and involved with case management services than a group of representative teenagers might have been. In addition, it was impossible to arrange such interviews in two counties in which no teenagers had received Learnfare case management, and in one county in which none of the 20 invited teenagers attended. However, the comments of teenagers who did participate lent dimension and anecdotal information to our fieldwork.

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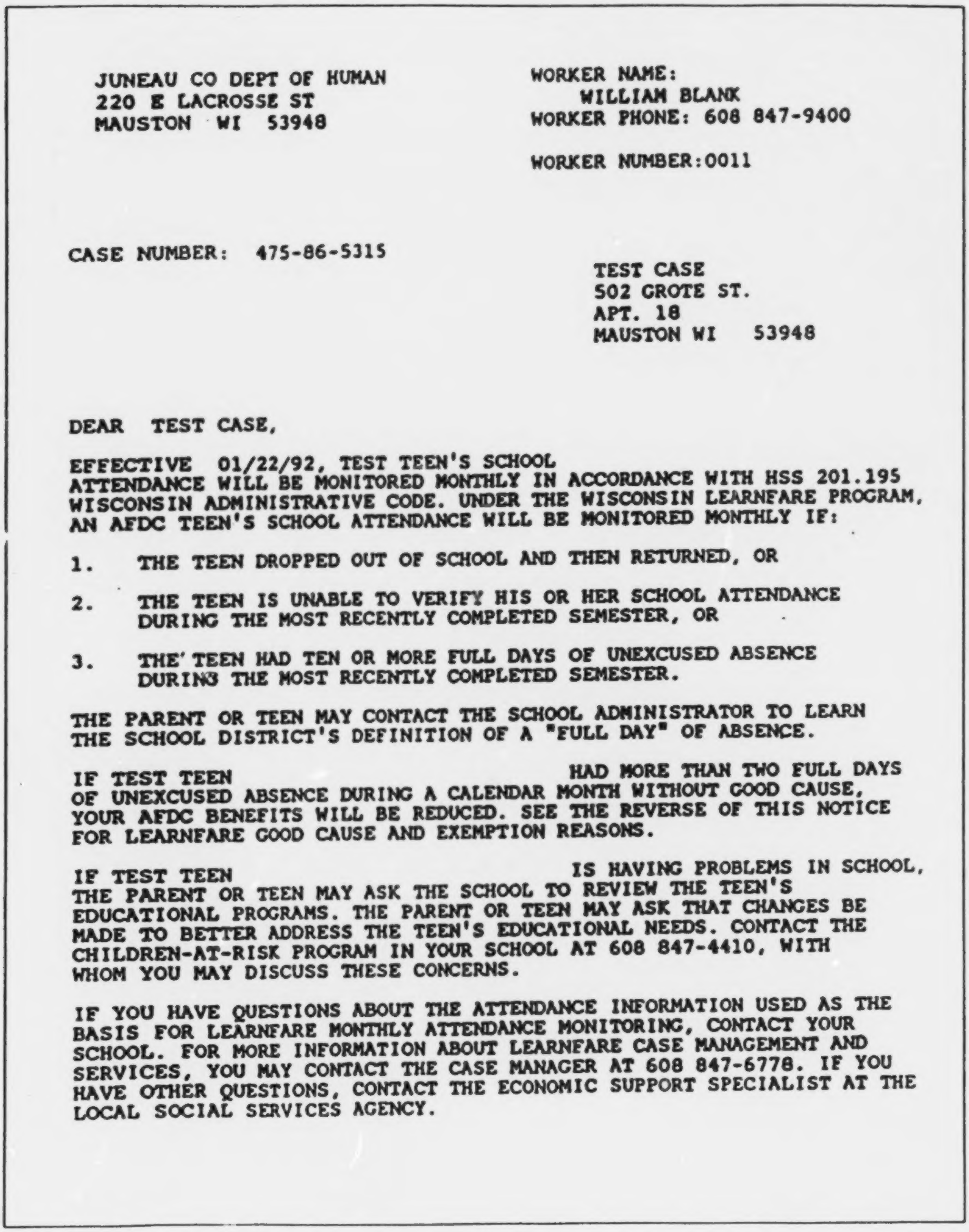
APPENDIX II

Notice Of Monthly Monitoring



JUNEAU CO DEPT OF HUMAN
220 E LACROSSE ST
MAUSTON WI 53948

WORKER NAME:
WILLIAM BLANK
WORKER PHONE: 608 847-9400

WORKER NUMBER:0011

CASE NUMBER: 475-86-5315

TEST CASE
502 GROTE ST.
APT. 18
MAUSTON WI 53948

DEAR TEST CASE,

EFFECTIVE 01/22/92, TEST TEEN'S SCHOOL ATTENDANCE WILL BE MONITORED MONTHLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH HSS 201.195 WISCONSIN ADMINISTRATIVE CODE. UNDER THE WISCONSIN LEARNFARE PROGRAM, AN AFDC TEEN'S SCHOOL ATTENDANCE WILL BE MONITORED MONTHLY IF:

1. THE TEEN DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL AND THEN RETURNED, OR
2. THE TEEN IS UNABLE TO VERIFY HIS OR HER SCHOOL ATTENDANCE DURING THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED SEMESTER, OR
3. THE TEEN HAD TEN OR MORE FULL DAYS OF UNEXCUSED ABSENCE DURING THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED SEMESTER.

THE PARENT OR TEEN MAY CONTACT THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR TO LEARN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT'S DEFINITION OF A "FULL DAY" OF ABSENCE.

IF TEST TEEN HAD MORE THAN TWO FULL DAYS OF UNEXCUSED ABSENCE DURING A CALENDAR MONTH WITHOUT GOOD CAUSE, YOUR AFDC BENEFITS WILL BE REDUCED. SEE THE REVERSE OF THIS NOTICE FOR LEARNFARE GOOD CAUSE AND EXEMPTION REASONS.

IF TEST TEEN IS HAVING PROBLEMS IN SCHOOL, THE PARENT OR TEEN MAY ASK THE SCHOOL TO REVIEW THE TEEN'S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS. THE PARENT OR TEEN MAY ASK THAT CHANGES BE MADE TO BETTER ADDRESS THE TEEN'S EDUCATIONAL NEEDS. CONTACT THE CHILDREN-AT-RISK PROGRAM IN YOUR SCHOOL AT 608 847-4410, WITH WHOM YOU MAY DISCUSS THESE CONCERNS.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ATTENDANCE INFORMATION USED AS THE BASIS FOR LEARNFARE MONTHLY ATTENDANCE MONITORING, CONTACT YOUR SCHOOL. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT LEARNFARE CASE MANAGEMENT AND SERVICES, YOU MAY CONTACT THE CASE MANAGER AT 608 847-6778. IF YOU HAVE OTHER QUESTIONS, CONTACT THE ECONOMIC SUPPORT SPECIALIST AT THE LOCAL SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY.

GOOD REASONS FOR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL

1. The teen is a parent and must stay home to take care of his or her newborn infant.

2. The teen is a parent and requires child care to attend school, but child care is not available.

3. The teen is a parent and requires transportation to and from the child care center, but neither public nor private transportation is available.

4. The teen is temporarily excused from attending by the school district.

5. The teen is exempt from attending school for religious reasons.

6. The teen is prohibited from attending school while he or she is in the process of being expelled from school.

7. The teen has been expelled from school and another school is not available.

8. The teen is age 16 through 19 and the school district determines that she or he will not graduate by age 20.

9. The teen does not attend school for 1 or more of these reasons:

   --Illness, injury, or incapacity of the teen or a family member.
   --Court appearance, in jail, prison, or juvenile secure detention.
   --Doctor or dentist appointments for the teen or teen's child.
   --A relative or friend's death.
   --Observance of a religious holiday.
   --A family emergency.
   --Transportation breakdown.
   --Suspension from school.
   --Any circumstance beyond the teen's control.

10. The teen has been found to have a good reason for not attending school through the fair hearing process.

REMINDER
Learnfare applies only to AFDC teens who are:

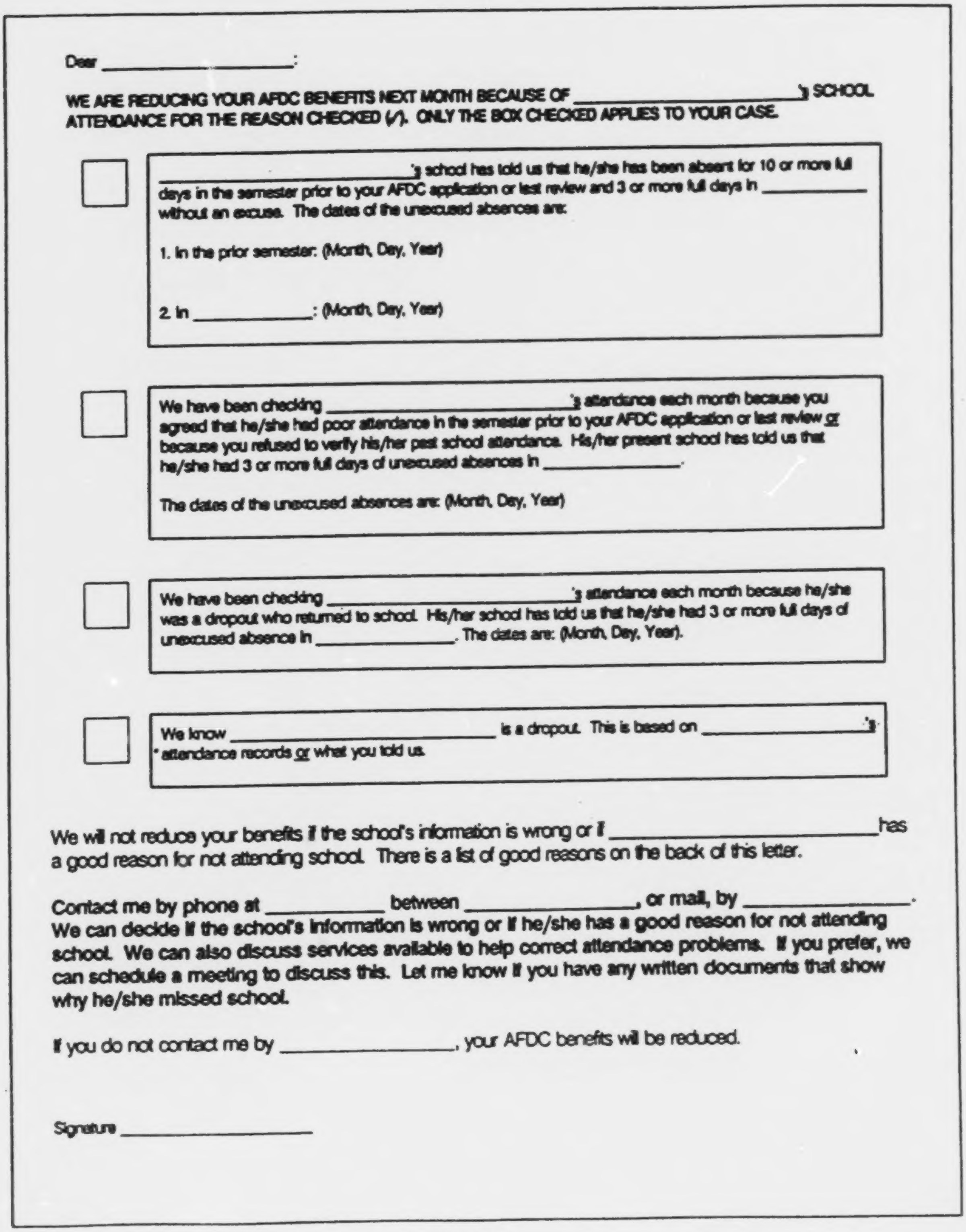
1. Age 13 through 19 and,

2. Who are parents themselves or who live with their natural or adoptive parent and,

3. Who have not graduated from high school or received a high school equivalency diploma.

APPENDIX III

Presanction Notice



Dear _______________:

WE ARE REDUCING YOUR AFDC BENEFITS NEXT MONTH BECAUSE OF _______________'s SCHOOL ATTENDANCE FOR THE REASON CHECKED (✓). ONLY THE BOX CHECKED APPLIES TO YOUR CASE.

☐ _______________'s school has told us that he/she has been absent for 10 or more full days in the semester prior to your AFDC application or last review and 3 or more full days in __________ without an excuse. The dates of the unexcused absences are:

1. In the prior semester: (Month, Day, Year)

2. In __________: (Month, Day, Year)

☐ We have been checking _______________'s attendance each month because you agreed that he/she had poor attendance in the semester prior to your AFDC application or last review or because you refused to verify his/her past school attendance. His/her present school has told us that he/she had 3 or more full days of unexcused absences in __________.

The dates of the unexcused absences are: (Month, Day, Year)

☐ We have been checking _______________'s attendance each month because he/she was a dropout who returned to school. His/her school has told us that he/she had 3 or more full days of unexcused absence in __________. The dates are: (Month, Day, Year).

☐ We know _______________ is a dropout. This is based on _______________'s attendance records or what you told us.

We will not reduce your benefits if the school's information is wrong or if _______________ has a good reason for not attending school. There is a list of good reasons on the back of this letter.

Contact me by phone at __________ between _______________, or mail, by _______________. We can decide if the school's information is wrong or if he/she has a good reason for not attending school. We can also discuss services available to help correct attendance problems. If you prefer, we can schedule a meeting to discuss this. Let me know if you have any written documents that show why he/she missed school.

If you do not contact me by _______________, your AFDC benefits will be reduced.

Signature _______________

GOOD REASONS FOR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL

1. The teen is a parent and must stay home to take care of his or her newborn infant.

2. The teen is a parent and requires child care to attend school, but child care is not available.

3. The teen is a parent and requires transportation to and from the child care center, but neither public nor private transportation is available.

4. The teen is temporarily excused from attending by the school district.

5. The teen is exempt from attending school for religious reasons.

6. The teen is prohibited from attending school while he or she is in the process of being expelled from school.

7. The teen has been expelled from school and another school is not available.

8. The teen is age 16 through 19 and the school district determines that she or he will not graduate by age 20.

9. The teen does not attend school for 1 or more of these reasons:

   --Illness, injury, or incapacity of the teen or a family member.
   --Court appearance, in jail, prison, or juvenile secure detention.
   --Doctor or dentist appointments for the teen or teen's child.
   --A relative or friend's death.
   --Observance of a religious holiday.
   --A family emergency.
   --Transportation breakdown.
   --Suspension from school.
   --Any circumstance beyond the teen's control.

10. The teen has been found to have a good reason for not attending school through the fair hearing process.

REMINDER
Learnfare applies only to AFDC teens who are:

1. Age 13 through 19 and,

2. Who are parents themselves or who live with their natural or adoptive parent and,

3. Who have not graduated from high school or received a high school equivalency diploma.

APPENDIX IV

Notice of Decision
(Counties Other Than Milwaukee)

DANE CO DEPT OF HUMAN SERV
1202 NORTHPORT DR

MADISON WI 53704

WORKER NAME AND PHONE NUMBER
MARCIA WILLIAMSON
608-242-6322
AGENCY PHONE NUMBER
608-242-6200

NOTICE OF DECISION

CASE NUMBER

WAIVER GROUP POLICIES

GROUP A: $30 IS DISREGARDED FROM NET EARNINGS + 1/6TH OF REMAINDER FOR 12 MONTHS. MEDICAL ASSISTANCE (MA) BENEFITS MAY BE EXTENDED FOR 12 MONTHS AFTER AFDC CLOSES.

GROUP B: $30 IS DISREGARDED FROM NET EARNINGS FOR 12 MONTHS + 1/3RD OF REMAINDER FOR FIRST 4 MONTHS. MA BENEFITS MAY BE EXTENDED FOR 12 MONTHS AFTER AFDC CLOSES.

DEAR

EFFECTIVE JAN 1, 1992 YOUR APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN APPROVED. YOUR FIRST CHECK WILL BE $517.00 AND YOUR REGULAR MONTHLY CHECK WILL BE $517.00.
YOU ARE ASSIGNED TO WAIVER GROUP "A" BECAUSE OF THE TERMS OF FEDERAL WAIVERS. SEE WAIVER GROUP POLICIES ON THIS NOTICE AND WAIVERS PAMPHLET YOU RECEIVED WHEN YOU APPLIED FOR AFDC. (49.19(5)STS)
ONE OR MORE MEMBERS OF YOUR AFDC GROUP HAVE FAILED TO MEET THE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT IN SEC.49.50(7) WIS STATS. THE TEEN(S) NAME AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ARE SHOWN ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THIS LETTER.

UNDER WISCONSIN'S LEARNFARE PROGRAM, AFDC TEENS WHO MISS 10 OR MORE FULL DAYS WITHOUT AN EXCUSE DURING A SEMESTER, WHO CANNOT VERIFY THEIR ATTENDANCE DURING A SEMESTER, OR WHO DROP OUT AND RETURN TO SCHOOL DURING A SEMESTER, WILL HAVE THEIR ATTENDANCE MONITORED MONTHLY. TEENS WHO DROP OUT OF SCHOOL WITHOUT GOOD CAUSE AND TEENS WHO HAVE MORE THAN TWO FULL DAYS OF UNEXCUSED ABSENCE WITHOUT GOOD CAUSE DURING THE MONTH MONITORED WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE AFDC GRANT. YOU MAY CONTACT THE TEEN'S SCHOOL TO FIND OUT HOW MANY MISSED CLASSES IN A DAY EQUALS A "FULL DAY" OF ABSENCE.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE INFORMATION USED AS THE BASIS FOR REDUCING YOUR AFDC GRANT, CALL YOUR WORKER AT THE NUMBER LISTED ABOVE.

IF A TEEN IS HAVING PROBLEMS IN SCHOOL, THE PARENT OR TEEN MAY ASK THE SCHOOL TO REVIEW THE TEEN'S COURSES. THE PARENT OR TEEN MAY ASK THAT CHANGES BE MADE TO BETTER ADDRESS THE TEEN'S EDUCATIONAL NEEDS.
CONTACT E. JAMES TRAVIS IN YOUR SCHOOL AT (608) 266-6270
FOR MORE INFORMATION.

LEARNFARE CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES ARE ALSO AVAILABLE TO HELP WITH THE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROBLEM. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT LEARNFARE CASE MANAGEMENT, CONTACT DEBBIE BORDSON-BLATTER AT (608) 242-6316.

YOU HAVE BEEN FOUND ELIGIBLE FOR BENEFITS UNDER THE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE (MA) PROGRAM EFFECTIVE MAR 31, 1992.
AN MA IDENTIFICATION CARD WILL BE MAILED TO YOU EACH MONTH THAT YOU REMAIN ELIGIBLE. THE CARD WILL LIST THE PERSONS WHO ARE COVERED. THE CARD MUST BE SHOWN EACH TIME YOU REQUEST HEALTH SERVICES. SHOW THE FIRST MA CARD YOU RECEIVE TO ANY PROVIDERS OF HEALTH CARE (HOSPITAL, DOCTOR, DRUGGIST, ETC.) THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED SERVICES FROM SINCE MAR 31, 1992. IF YOU HAVE PAID THESE BILLS, THE PROVIDER MAY REIMBURSE YOU IF THE SERVICES ARE COVERED UNDER THE MA PROGRAM.

EFFECTIVE JAN 1, 1992 YOUR APPLICATION FOR FOOD STAMPS HAS BEEN APPROVED. DURING THE FIRST MONTH YOU WILL RECEIVE $251. WORTH OF FOOD STAMPS. YOU WILL RECEIVE A REGULAR MONTHLY ALLOTMENT OF FOOD STAMPS WORTH $251.
IF YOU DO NOT REAPPLY BY MAY 18, 1992, YOU WILL NOT CONTINUE TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR FOOD STAMPS.

WE HAVE DETERMINED THAT IS NOT ENROLLED IN SCHOOL OR HAS DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL. WE HAVE ALSO DETERMINED THAT GOOD CAUSE DOES NOT EXIST OR THAT YOU HAVE FAILED TO RESPOND TO OUR REQUEST TO VERIFY GOOD CAUSE. SEE THE REVERSE SIDE OF THIS NOTICE FOR LEARNFARE GOOD CAUSE AND EXEMPTION REASONS.

THEREFORE, EFFECTIVE 12/01/91,. WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE AFDC CASE BECAUSE S/HE FAILED TO MEET THE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT WITHOUT GOOD CAUSE. (SEC. 49.50(7) WIS. STATS.) S/HE CAN BE RETURNED TO THE AFDC CASE WHEN YOU PROVIDE VERIFICATION FROM THE SCHOOL THAT S/HE HAS BEEN ENROLLED ONE MONTH (ASSUMING S/HE MEETS OTHER ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS) OR THAT GOOD CAUSE EXISTS FOR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL.

YOUR AFDC GROUP SIZE = 3; WEEKLY HOURS WORKED = 0; CHILD CARE FOR 0 CHILDREN = $.00; FOOD STAMP GROUP SIZE = 4;
$.00 USED FOR UTILITIES; $.00 PAID FOR HOUSING; CHILD CARE = $.00; GROUP PREGNANCIES = 0; MA GROUP SIZE = 3

A F D C - WAIVER GROUP A

ALL INCOME REPORTED	0.00	STANDARD OF NEED	647.00
AFDC INCOME LIMIT	1192.00	AFDC PAYMENT	517.60
EARNED INCOME REPORTED	0.00	- BUDGETABLE INCOME	0.00
- WORK EXPENSE DISREGARD	0.00	= UNROUNDED GRANT	517.60
- $30 AND 1/6 DISREGARD	0.00	- CENTS	.60
- DEPENDENT CARE	0.00	= GRANT AMOUNT	517.00
+ UNEARNED INCOME	0.00	- RECOVERY AMT	0.00
- EXEMPT INCOME	0.00	= MONTHLY CHECK	517.00
= BUDGETABLE INCOME	0.00		

F O O D S T A M P S

ALL INCOME REPORTED	517.00	NET INCOME LIMIT	1117.00
FOOD STAMP INCOME LIMIT	1452.00	ALLOTMENT	251.00
EARNED INCOME REPORTED	0.00	- RECOUPMENT	0.00
+ UNEARNED INCOME	517.00	= NET ALLOTMENT	251.00
- EXCESS MEDICAL EXPENSE	0.00		
- EARNED INCOME DEDUCTION	0.00		
- STANDARD DEDUCTION	122.00		
- DEPENDENT CARE DEDUCTION	0.00		
- SHELTER DEDUCTION	0.00		
= NET INCOME	395.00		

*** SEE THE BACK OF THIS NOTICE FOR YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES. ***

****

Notice of Decision

(Milwaukee County)

MILWAUKEE CO DEPT OF SOCIAL SERV
1220 W VLIET STREET

MILWAUKEE WI 53205

WORKER NAME AND PHONE NUMBER
ANNIE THOMPSON
414-649-3112
AGENCY PHONE NUMBER
414-289-6211

MAR 31, 1992 NOTICE OF DECISION
CASE NUMBER

WORKER NUMBER
8668

MILWAUKEE WI 53207

DEAR

EFFECTIVE MAY 1, 1992 THE AMOUNT OF MONEY YOU WILL RECEIVE WILL BE CHANGED FROM $440.00 TO $248.00 BECAUSE:
THE NUMBER OF PERSONS RECEIVING AID HAS DECREASED. (49.19(11)(A) STATS)
ONE OR MORE MEMBERS OF YOUR AFDC GROUP HAVE FAILED TO MEET THE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT IN SEC 49.50(7) WIS STATS. THE TEEN(S) NAME AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ARE SHOWN ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THIS LETTER.

UNDER WISCONSIN'S LEARNFARE PROGRAM, AFDC TEENS WHO MISS 10 OR MORE FULL DAYS WITHOUT AN EXCUSE DURING A SEMESTER, WHO CANNOT VERIFY THEIR ATTENDANCE DURING A SEMESTER, OR WHO DROP OUT AND RETURN TO SCHOOL DURING A SEMESTER, WILL HAVE THEIR ATTENDANCE MONITORED MONTHLY. TEENS WHO DROP OUT OF SCHOOL WITHOUT GOOD CAUSE AND TEENS WHO HAVE MORE THAN TWO FULL DAYS OF UNEXCUSED ABSENCE WITHOUT GOOD CAUSE DURING THE MONTH MONITORED WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE AFDC GRANT. YOU MAY CONTACT THE TEEN'S SCHOOL TO FIND OUT HOW MANY MISSED CLASSES IN A DAY EQUALS A "FULL DAY" OF ABSENCE.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE INFORMATION USED AS THE BASIS FOR REDUCING YOUR AFDC GRANT, CONTACT WEE CARE DAY CARE AT (414) 466-4470 FOR MORE INFORMATION. WEE CARE DAY CARE CAN ALSO PROVIDE YOU WITH INFORMATION ABOUT ADDITIONAL SERVICES AVAILABLE TO HELP WITH A SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROBLEM.

IF A TEEN IS HAVING PROBLEMS IN SCHOOL, THE PARENT OR TEEN MAY ASK THE SCHOOL TO REVIEW THE TEEN'S COURSES. THE PARENT OR TEEN MAY ASK THAT CHANGES BE MADE TO BETTER ADDRESS THE TEEN'S EDUCATIONAL NEEDS.
CONTACT HAZEL LUSTER IN YOUR SCHOOL AT (414) 265-5742
FOR MORE INFORMATION.

IF A CHILD IN YOUR CUSTODY IS NOT INCLUDED ON YOUR AFDC GRANT AND THERE IS A CHILD SUPPORT ORDER FOR THAT CHILD, YOU MAY BE ENTITLED TO RECEIVE ANY SUPPORT COLLECTED FOR THAT CHILD FOR MONTHS S/HE IS NOT INCLUDED ON YOUR GRANT. CALL THE CLERK OF COURT IN THE COUNTY WHERE YOUR SUPPORT ORDER WAS ENTERED IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS.

ONE OR MORE OF YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES HAS CHANGED AND YOUR FOOD STAMP ALLOTMENT WILL INCREASE TO $ 203.00 STARTING ON 05/01/92. THE BASIS FOR THE AMOUNT IS EXPRESSED IN THE BUDGET COMPUTATIONS THAT APPEAR BELOW. 7 CFR 273.12

YOU HAVE BEEN NOTIFIED PREVIOUSLY THAT ATTENDANCE WOULD BE MONITORED MONTHLY.

WE HAVE DETERMINED THAT HAD MORE THAN TWO FULL DAYS OF UNEXCUSED ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL IN THE MONTH MONITORED. WE HAVE ALSO DETERMINED THAT GOOD CAUSE DOES NOT EXIST OR THAT YOU HAVE FAILED TO RESPOND TO OUR REQUEST TO VERIFY GOOD CAUSE. SEE THE REVERSE SIDE OF THIS NOTICE FOR LEARNFARE GOOD CAUSE AND EXEMPTION REASONS.

THEREFORE, EFFECTIVE 05/01/92, WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE AFDC CASE BECAUSE S/HE FAILED TO MEET THE MONTHLY ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT WITHOUT GOOD CAUSE. (SEC 49.50(7) WIS. STATS.) S/HE WILL BE REMOVED FROM YOUR GRANT FOR ONE MONTH FOR EACH MONTH S/HE FAILS TO MEET THIS ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT.

```
YOUR AFDC GROUP SIZE =  1; WEEKLY HOURS WORKED =   0; CHILD CARE FOR  0 CHILDREN =    $.00; FOOD STAMP GROUP SIZE =  2;
   $182.00 USED FOR UTILITIES.  $62.00 PAID FOR HOUSING; CHILD CARE =        $.00; GROUP PREGNANCIES =  0; MA GROUP SIZE =  1

 A F D C - WAIVER GROUP A
TALL INCOME REPORTED              0.00T   STANDARD OF NEED        311.00
IAFDC INCOME LIMIT              576.00I   AFDC PAYMENT            248.80
 EARNED INCOME REPORTED           0.00    - BUDGETABLE INCOME       0.00
 - WORK EXPENSE DISREGARD         0.00    = UNROUNDED GRANT       248.80
 - $30 AND 1/6 DISREGARD          0.00    - CENTS                    .80
 - DEPENDENT CARE                 0.00    = GRANT AMOUNT          248.00
 + UNEARNED INCOME                0.00    - RECOVERY AMT            0.00
 - EXEMPT INCOME                  0.00    = MONTHLY CHECK         248.00
 = BUDGETABLE INCOME              0.00

 F O O D   S T A M P S
TALL INCOME REPORTED            248.00T   NET INCOME LIMIT         740.00
IFOOD STAMP INCOME LIMIT        962.00I   ALLOTMENT                203.00
 EARNED INCOME REPORTED           0.00    - RECOUPMENT               0.00
 + UNEARNED INCOME              248.00    = NET ALLOTMENT          203.00
 - EXCESS MEDICAL EXPENSE         0.00
 - EARNED INCOME DEDUCTION        0.00
 - STANDARD DEDUCTION           122.00
 - DEPENDENT CARE DEDUCTION       0.00
 - SHELTER DEDUCTION            181.00
 = NET INCOME                     0.00
```

*** SEE THE BACK OF THIS NOTICE FOR YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES. ***

APPENDIX V

Learnfare Presanction Checklist

You must COMPLETE this form for each teen BEFORE ENTERING ANY LEARNFARE SANCTION CODE. You must also FILE IT IN THE ECONOMIC SUPPORT CASE RECORD.

Case Name/Number: ______________________ **Teen Name/Number:** ______________________ **Benefit Month:** ______________________

I. Potential SA F - Sanction for Failure to Sign School District Required Release of Information

Mandatory Activities/Forms	ESS or CM Initials/Date Completed
Document the school district requirement for Release of Information.	
Document the caretaker/teen's refusal to sign.	

II. Potential SA D - Sanction as a Dropout

Mandatory Activities/Forms	ESS or CM Initials/Date Completed
If caretaker/teen reports drop:	
Document report/acknowledgement of drop.	
Complete Learnfare: Attendance and Exemption & Good Cause Narrative, including outcome if disputed or EX/GC claimed.	
If school or another source, other than caretaker/teen, reports drop:	
Document source reporting drop status or 20 consecutive days.	
Complete Learnfare Presanction Review Letter, using Box 4.	
If response, complete Learnfare: Attendance and Exemption & Good Cause Narrative, including outcome if disputed or EX/GC claimed.	

III. Potential SA A - Sanction for Attendance Noncompliance

Mandatory Activities/Forms	ESS or CM Initials/Date Completed
Document basis for Monthly Monitoring (MO)	
If school report verified 10 or more full days unexcused absence, document source, absences and correct prior semester period.	
If acknowledgement of 10 or more full days unexcused absence or refusal to provide prior semester verification, document acknowledgement or refusal	
If dropout who returned to school in current semester, document dropout returning.	
Document 3 or more full days unexcused absence in month monitored (dates must have occurred subsequent to generation of MO Notice + 4 days).	
Complete Learnfare Presanction Review Letter.	
If MO due to school report of 10 or more in prior semester, use Box 1 and provide dates of absence for both prior semester and month monitored.	
If MO due to client acknowledgement or refusal to provide prior semester verification, use Box 2 and provide dates for month monitored.	
If MO due to dropout returning, use Box 3 and provide dates for month monitored.	
Document response/no response to Learnfare Presanction Review Letter.	
If response, complete Learnfare: Attendance and Exemption & Good Cause Narrative, including outcome if disputed or EX/GC claimed.	

DRAFT

LEARNFARE
CASE MANAGEMENT
MANUAL

Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services
Division of Economic Support
January 1994

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1.0 Introduction

The Learnfare program is designed to encourage teens from AFDC families to attend school regularly so they can obtain a high school education. Learnfare seeks to assist teenage AFDC recipients in acquiring, through education, the skills needed to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

The program presents a balanced approach to improving school attendance through two primary components: (1) **the financial sanction** and (2) **case management services.**

The **sanction** is a reduction in the AFDC grant resulting from poor school attendance and serves as a catalyst for teens and their parents to change behavior; **case management** enables them to do so by identifying and addressing related needs.

As such, case management is a critical ingredient in helping families to resolve the problems which underlie poor school attendance. Effective case management requires teamwork, with the teen, his or her family, and other community resources, in an effort to develop personally tailored solutions to the teen's attendance problem.

This manual documents your responsibilities as a Learnfare Case Manager. You must apply the concepts and procedures contained in this manual as you provide case management to Learnfare teens.

For economic support policies and procedures relating to Learnfare (e.g., policies related to sanctions), see AFDC Handbook, Appendix 6 or contact an Economic Support Specialist at your local county/tribal department of human or social services.

2.0 Purpose of Learnfare Case Management

The purpose of Learnfare case management is to help Learnfare teens resolve any school attendance problems they may have. You will do this by finding out what the teen needs to ensure his or her regular school attendance and seeing that those needs are met.

Thus, you, as a case manager, must be aware of what services are available, not only through the school system, but in the teen's community. And, just as importantly, you must know how to access those services.

Again, helping the Learnfare teen means:

1. meeting frequently with the teen and his/her family to learn about them and the problems which may be contributing to the teen's poor school attendance;
2. identifying what is needed to correct the attendance problem; and
3. ensuring that all services needed are actually available and obtained.

3.0 Learnfare Case Management Defined

Learnfare case management is defined as intervention, either prior to or concurrent with a Learnfare sanction, for the purpose of improving school attendance. Learnfare Case Management includes:

1. assessing family needs;
2. developing a family service plan;
3. arranging, coordinating and advocating for appropriate services for the teen and his/her family;
4. monitoring and evaluating the teen's/family's progress to guarantee appropriateness and availability of the services.

4.0 Target Population

A Learnfare teen is any teen, age 13 through 19 and receiving AFDC, who is a parent or who lives with his/her biological or adoptive parent(s), and who has not already graduated from high school or received an equivalency diploma (HSED or GED).

All Learnfare teens must attend school regularly or they could be sanctioned.

All Learnfare teens are eligible for Learnfare case management services.

Only Learnfare teens are eligible for Learnfare case management services.

Teens receiving AFDC who have already graduated from high school or received an equivalency diploma are not Learnfare teens and are therefore not eligible for case management services.

Teens receiving AFDC who are not parents themselves or living with their biological or adoptive parents are not Learnfare teens and are therefore not eligible for case management services.

4.1 Child-at-Risk

Most Learnfare teens with attendance problems serious enough to warrant sanctioning will meet the statutory definition of a "child-at-risk".

Information about "Children-at-Risk" and the "Children-at-Risk Program" (CAR) is included here so you will be aware that the Learnfare teen may already be involved with services and other providers. Coordination with the appropriate staff at the school (e.g., school social worker or guidance counselor) is absolutely necessary to ensure that appropriate services are provided to the teen and his/her family and that there is no duplication of services.

The definition of "children-at-risk" is:

1. Students who are one or more years behind their age group in the number of credits attained or in basic skill levels and are one of the following:

   * Dropouts.

   * Absent more than 15% of the number of hours of direct pupil instruction required during the semester, excused or unexcused.

   * Parents.

   * Adjudicated delinquents.

2. Students in grades 5 through 8 who are two or more years behind their age group in basic skill levels.

3. Students in grades 5 through 8 who are two or more years behind their age group in basic skill levels and have been absent, in any school semester, for more than 10% of the number of hours of direct pupil instruction required during the semester, excused or unexcused.

Learnfare students who meet the statutory definition of a "child-at-risk" may be eligible for alternative educational programs offered in the school district. Be sure to find out how the "children-at-risk" program is operated by the school district(s) in your county.

5.0 Priorities and Service Availability

Case Management services are to be provided to any Learnfare teen who requests them.

If you must choose who to serve because of limited resources, priority must be given to sanctioned teens, on a first come, first serve basis.

After sanctioned teens are served, you may serve teens who are not currently sanctioned, but whose school attendance is being monitored monthly.

Once the monitored teens have been served, you may then serve other non-sanctioned Learnfare teens to support their continued involvement in school. Even though a teen may have a good reason for his or her absences from school, those absences are still harmful to the teen's education and may be a sign of personal or family problems that would benefit from early intervention.

Teen parents, in particular, can benefit from early and intensive case management to ensure that prenatal or perinatal care is provided, adequate child care arrangements have been made, and they are educated in positive parenting skills. If these needs are met, you will be more successful in helping the teen remain in school, or return to school in a relatively short period.

In the event that resources do not permit you to begin working with a teen/family within 30 days of a request, the teen must be reported on the Learnfare Exception Report (see section 9.0 for exception reporting).

6.0 Offers of Case Management

Offers of case management services are made on the computer generated Notice of Monthly Monitoring and the Notice of Decision sent to the teen or his/her caretaker when the county or tribal economic support specialist (ESS) enters the appropriate code into the system. Copies of these notices are attached as Appendix 1.

The notices contain the following Learnfare related information:

1. The Learnfare case management contact person or agency and phone number;
2. A statement notifying the teen/caretaker that case management services are available to help with the school attendance problem;

3. The name and phone number of the teen's "child-at-risk" coordinator within his/her school district;

4. Information regarding monthly monitoring of attendance or the grant reduction due to the sanction;

5. Good cause reasons for not attending school and reasons for exemption from the Learnfare program.

In addition to the offer of services on the notices, you are strongly encouraged to contact the family by phone, mail, and/or home visit, to promote the family's cooperation and participation in activities to help with the attendance problem.

6.1 Monthly Report

To assist you in identifying teens potentially in need of case management services, the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) generates a monthly report titled "13-19 Year Old AFDC Teens with a Sanction, Attendance Monitoring, or Good Cause Learnfare Status" (PW604B48); one copy is sent to the case management agency and the other to the county or tribal agency. Use this report to identify teens to whom you will offer case management.

The report is sorted by the ESS worker number and includes the following Learnfare related information:

1. Case number;

2. Case name, address and phone number;

3. Teen's name, social security number, age, highest grade completed, current school status (i.e., full time student, part time student, not in school), school district code, Learnfare status (e.g., sanctioned, monthly monitoring of attendance), sex, and race;

4. Name and phone number of the teen's Child-At-Risk coordinator.

If a teen's name is underlined, it is a signal to you that the teen is a **new referral** and has been added since last month's report.

6.2 Learnfare Status Codes

Teens are selected for this report if their economic support record shows any of the following Learnfare status codes:

-	<MO>	Monthly monitoring of attendance.
-	<SA A>	Sanctioned for poor attendance.

-	<SA D>	Sanctioned for being a dropout.
-	<SA F>	Sanctioned for failure to sign a Confidential Information Release Authorization when it is required by the school district to access attendance data.

Teens with the following Learnfare status codes will also be selected for this report. These codes indicate good cause reasons for not attending school. Teens with the following status codes are not currently sanctioned:

-	<DA>	Day Care Not Available.
-	<EX>	Expulsion Pending.
-	<FD>	Fair Hearing Decision.
-	<IF>	Caring for Infant.
-	<IN>	Incapacitated.
-	<LI>	Living Too Remote.
-	<TR>	Transportation Unavailable.
-	<RE>	Religious Reasons.

7.0 Case Management Process

When a Learnfare teen requests case management services, do the following:

7.1 First Contact

The first contact between the teen and case manager is very important. Try to use it to establish in the teen's mind a positive perception of Learnfare and school attendance. Also, use it to gather important information about the teen and his or her family.

Keep the first meeting as informal as possible in order to put the teen at ease. You may prefer to use group meetings as a means of making teens more comfortable and encouraging them to interact with you and each other.

Be clear about your expectations and appointments for further program activities. Strike a balance between caring and toughness and make sure the teen knows that you mean what you say.

7.2 Assessment

Conduct a family **assessment** to determine appropriate action needed to address the school attendance problem.

A home visit may provide a good opportunity for assessing family functioning and initiating and maintaining a relationship with the teen and his or her family. Together, you and the family must identify circumstances that contribute to the school attendance problem. Keep in mind that the assessment is not something that you do to the family, it is something you do with the family.

Information gathered during this phase may suggest the need for referral to other resources for a professional evaluation of a specific concern.

Examples include referrals for:

- Health assessment.
- Child abuse or neglect assessment.
- AODA assessment.
- Mental health counseling.
- Family counseling.
- Educational assessment including testing for learning disabilities.
- Child care.
- Parenting classes.
- Family planning.
- Employment and training services.

The most effective assessment tool is a series of personal appointments with the teen and his/her family in which you hear, see, and sense the teen's situation. You can learn who this person is, what strengths can be worked with, and what weaknesses must be compensated for.

Assessment is an ongoing process in which the case manager, over time, develops a relationship with the teen that includes personal support, and continually tracks his/her progress in meeting established goals.

Document the results of the assessment in the case management record. (See documentation requirements in section 8.0.)

7.3 Family Service Plan

Develop a written **family service plan**, signed by the teen/caretaker designed to, at a minimum, remedy the circumstances contributing to the school attendance problem. When possible, parents and other family members should participate in the development of the family service plan. The service plan should meet all relevant documentation requirements shown in section 8.0.

a. Work with the teen/family to develop a mutually agreed upon plan with clear expectations, realistic goals, and reasonable time frames for achieving those goals. The primary goal of the service plan should be regular school attendance.

b. Identify in the plan the services the teen and/or family must participate in to reach those goals.

c. Discuss long term goals and short term objectives and define clear timelines. Short term objectives should be quickly achievable allowing the teen to experience regular "wins".

d. Encourage the teen to think of the service plan as his/hers and support his/her ability to achieve the goals agreed upon.

e. Include in the plan a time frame for regular follow up and a tentative date for the termination of case management.

If any service identified in the family service plan to which the teen and/or family has been referred will not be available without a substantial waiting period (i.e., within 30 days of a request), identify an appropriate alternative.

If an appropriate alternate service is not available within 30 days, complete an Exception Report (See Exception Reporting in Section 9.0.)

If no alternative service exists because it is not offered in the community, indicate this by entering an "X" in the section of the Exception Report titled "Service Not Offered in Area".

7.4 Implementing Plan

Assist in **Implementing** the family service plan intended to improve the teen's school attendance.

Generally, this will consist of the following:

a. Assuring that the teen/family has access to the services identified in the family service plan.

b. Being aware of the various service providers that are already working with the teen/family to allow you to focus your efforts, link service providers where appropriate, and lessen the potential for duplication of services.

c. Identifying and helping to fill gaps in service delivery.

d. Working closely with the school's Children-At-Risk coordinator, counselors, attendance officers, principals, and teachers to address the attendance problems.

e. Assisting a teen parent in locating appropriate child care and transportation.

f. Making referrals or assisting the family in scheduling appointments for family counselling or other activities.

g. Referring to appropriate alternate education programs, such as those of the Vocational Technical and Adult Education (VTAE) system.

h. Assisting to obtain needed educational funding through the JOBS program or other funding sources.

7.5 Monitoring And Evaluating

Monitor and **evaluate** progress. It is the case manager's responsibility to regularly monitor and evaluate all aspects of the family service plan. To do so adequately requires that you be in regular and frequent contact with the teen and his/her family so that, together, you can continually assess progress and make necessary changes to the family service plan. This may mean that you have to alter your work schedule in order to be accessible when both parent(s) and teens are available.

Monitoring and evaluating progress means ensuring that:

a. Services identified in the plan are being provided in a timely manner.

b. Services remain appropriate to meet the teen's/family's changing needs. As needs change, the plan must be adjusted accordingly.

c. The teen is complying with the service plan requirements and making satisfactory progress toward regular school attendance.

7.6 Terminating Services

You must continue to provide Case Management services at least until:

a. The teen is attending school regularly as defined in Learnfare policy (i.e., meets the monthly attendance requirement for one calendar month -- see AFDC Handbook Appendix 6); **or,**

b. The teen/family indicates that they no longer want services; **or,**

c. You establish that the family refused or failed to:

  (1) Participate in developing a family service plan; **or**

  (2) Comply with the requirements of the family service plan.

You may choose, at your discretion, to continue case management beyond one month after the teen is regularly attending school, as long as the case continues to be eligible for AFDC. If the case loses AFDC eligibility, services may continue through the end of the semester in which eligibility is lost.

Note: Be sure to notify the appropriate ESS when you become aware that a sanctioned dropout has returned to school and met the monthly attendance requirement. Do this to ensure that the AFDC grant is restored in a timely fashion. Note this contact in the case management record.

8.0 Documentation Requirements

All case management activities must be documented in the Learnfare teen's case management record.

The following information must be included in the case management record:

1. Primary person's first name, middle initial and last name. The primary person is the person that applied for AFDC.
2. Case number. The case number is the primary person's social security number.
3. Teen's first name, middle initial and last name.
4. Teen's social security number.
5. Teen's date of birth.
6. Name of the Learnfare case manager to whom this case is assigned.
7. The Learnfare status of the teen at the time s/he is referred for case management services. Learnfare status can be obtained from the monthly report referred to in section 6.0 of this document.

8. The date that the teen or family requests or indicates an interest in case management services. This is not necessarily the date that case management was offered (i.e., the official offer of case management is made on the Notice of Decision at the time of sanction or Notice of Monthly Monitoring).

9. The date of the initial assessment.

10. The barriers to regular school attendance which were identified during the assessment (e.g., AODA, child abuse/neglect, need for counseling, need for alternative education, etc.) and the results of any testing.

11. Details of the family service plan developed to address the barriers to regular school attendance identified during the assessment, with reasonable time frames for achieving goals. The plan must include clear and measurable objectives. Attach additional documentation as necessary.

12. Details of all follow-up services provided to assist in and monitor the implementation of the family service plan. Also describe any other services provided by the case manager to the family. Include the dates and content of all contacts with the teen/family.

13. The details of all services for which the teen and/or family are referred (e.g., AODA, child abuse/neglect, alternative education, child care, transportation, etc.) and who will be providing the service.

14. The date the referral is made, the date the service is scheduled to begin, and the anticipated duration of the service. Estimate or provide a range as necessary (e.g., substance abuse treatment for about 4-6 weeks, etc.). If it is impossible to estimate, simply indicate this.

15. The actual begin and end date for each referral service, as well as the estimated cost, either as a single charge or rate per day, week, or month, if available.

    Complete a Learnfare Exception Report if neither the service nor an appropriate alternative is available for 30 days from the date of referral. See the following section (Reporting Requirements) for information on the Learnfare Exception Report and reporting requirements.

16. The date and the reason that case management services are being terminated (e.g., family uncooperative, dropout returned to school and met monthly attendance requirement, etc.).

9.0 Reporting Requirements

9.1 Learnfare Exception Report

Complete a Learnfare Exception Report (Appendix 2) only when a teen and/or family experiences a wait of 30 days or more for a service, (including case management), identified in the family service plan because neither the service nor an appropriate alternative is available. Complete this form each month until case management, the service, or an appropriate alternative service becomes available and the teen begins to receive the identified service.

If no appropriate alternative service is available because it is not offered in the community, indicate this by placing an "X" in the appropriate space (i.e., "Service Not Offered in Area") and complete the Exception Report for one month only.

The Learnfare Exception Report must be submitted no later than the 10th of the month after the teen/family has been waiting for services for 30 days.

EXAMPLE:

March 3	Teen requests a service.
March 4	Teen referred for the service; service is not currently available and no appropriate alternative is currently available.
April 3	Teen still waiting for services (30 days).
By May 10	A report for the teen must be submitted showing that s/he has been waiting for services for 30-60 days.

Continue to complete and submit a report monthly for each teen/family as long as the teen/family continues to wait for any service identified in the family service plan. Use the monthly report to show changes in waiting status until all planned services are actually provided.

The reports should be sent no later than the 10th of the month following the report month to:

Division of Economic Support
Bureau of Welfare Initiatives
P.O. Box 7935
Madison, WI 53707-7935

Attn: Learnfare

9.2 Learnfare Case Management Monthly Report

The Learnfare Case Management Monthly Report (Appendix 3) is to be completed at the end of each month and submitted to DES by the 10th of the following month. Submit this report each month even if all your entries are zeros (i.e., you are not providing case management services to any Learnfare teens in your county).

The Case Management Monthly Report asks for the following information:

- Number of new teens/families contacting you and actually requesting case management during the report month.
- Of those requesting case management, how many teens/families are receiving case management during the report month.
- Number of teens/families receiving case management during the report month that are carried over from prior months.

Provide the total number of Learnfare teens served by other than the Learnfare case manager during the report month if you can obtain that information (i.e., social worker in the county/tribal agency, court worker, youth services worker, etc.).

To complete the Case Management Report:

1. Enter the total number of teens/families on the line to the right of the corresponding statement.

2. Of the total shown in entries 1, 2, or 3, indicate how many of those teens are:

   A. Sanctioned.
   B. On monthly monitoring.
   C. With good cause.
   D. In another status (ST, UV).

EXAMPLE:

1. Number of new teens/families requesting case management in the report month: 3

   A. Sanctioned teens 2
   B. Teens on monthly Monitoring 1
   C. Teens with good cause 0
   D. Teens in other status 0

The number shown on line 1 must equal the total of line A, B, C, and D. Do not count the same teen more than once when making entries to A, B, C, or D.

For example, a teen sanctioned in this report month is also subject to monthly attendance monitoring. Count the teen as sanctioned only; do not also count the teen as being subject to monthly attendance monitoring.

The Case Management reports must be completed at the end of each month and submitted to the address shown below no later than the 10th of the month following the report month.

Division of Economic Support
Bureau of Welfare Initiatives
P.O. Box 7935
Madison, WI 53707-7935

Attn: Learnfare

APPENDIX I

JUNEAU CO DEPT OF HUMAN
220 E LACROSSE ST
MAUSTON WI 53948

WORKER NAME:
WILLIAM BLANK
WORKER PHONE: 608 847-9400

WORKER NUMBER:0011

CASE NUMBER: 475-86-5315

TEST CASE
502 GROTE ST.
APT. 18
MAUSTON WI 53948

DEAR TEST CASE,

EFFECTIVE 01/22/92, TEST TEEN'S SCHOOL ATTENDANCE WILL BE MONITORED MONTHLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH HSS 201.195 WISCONSIN ADMINISTRATIVE CODE. UNDER THE WISCONSIN LEARNFARE PROGRAM, AN AFDC TEEN'S SCHOOL ATTENDANCE WILL BE MONITORED MONTHLY IF:

1. THE TEEN DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL AND THEN RETURNED, OR
2. THE TEEN IS UNABLE TO VERIFY HIS OR HER SCHOOL ATTENDANCE DURING THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED SEMESTER, OR
3. THE TEEN HAD TEN OR MORE FULL DAYS OF UNEXCUSED ABSENCE DURING THE MOST RECENTLY COMPLETED SEMESTER.

THE PARENT OR TEEN MAY CONTACT THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR TO LEARN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT'S DEFINITION OF A "FULL DAY" OF ABSENCE.

IF TEST TEEN HAD MORE THAN TWO FULL DAYS OF UNEXCUSED ABSENCE DURING A CALENDAR MONTH WITHOUT GOOD CAUSE, YOUR AFDC BENEFITS WILL BE REDUCED. SEE THE REVERSE OF THIS NOTICE FOR LEARNFARE GOOD CAUSE AND EXEMPTION REASONS.

IF TEST TEEN IS HAVING PROBLEMS IN SCHOOL, THE PARENT OR TEEN MAY ASK THE SCHOOL TO REVIEW THE TEEN'S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS. THE PARENT OR TEEN MAY ASK THAT CHANGES BE MADE TO BETTER ADDRESS THE TEEN'S EDUCATIONAL NEEDS. CONTACT THE CHILDREN-AT-RISK PROGRAM IN YOUR SCHOOL AT 608 847-4410, WITH WHOM YOU MAY DISCUSS THESE CONCERNS.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ATTENDANCE INFORMATION USED AS THE BASIS FOR LEARNFARE MONTHLY ATTENDANCE MONITORING, CONTACT YOUR SCHOOL. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT LEARNFARE CASE MANAGEMENT AND SERVICES, YOU MAY CONTACT THE CASE MANAGER AT 608 847-6778. IF YOU HAVE OTHER QUESTIONS, CONTACT THE ECONOMIC SUPPORT SPECIALIST AT THE LOCAL SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY.

GOOD CAUSE (REASONS) FOR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL

1. The teen is a parent and must stay home to take care of his or her newborn infant.

2. S/he is a parent and requires child care to attend school, but child care is not available.

3. S/he is a parent and requires transport to and from the child care center, but neither public nor private transportation is available.

4. S/he is temporarily excused from attendance by the school district.

5. S/he is exempt from school attendance for religious reasons.

6. S/he is prohibited from attending school while s/he is in the process of being expelled from school.

7. S/he has been expelled from school and another school is not available.

8. S/he is age 16 through 19 and the school district determines that s/he will not graduate by age 20.

9. S/he does not attend school for one or more of these reasons:

   - Illness, injury, or incapacity of teen or family member.
   - Court appearance, in jail, prison, or juvenile secure detention.
   - Doctor/dentist appointment for teen or the teen's child.
   - Death of relative or friend.
   - Observance of religious holiday.
   - Family emergency.
   - Transportation breakdown.
   - Suspension from school.
   - Any circumstance beyond teen's control.

10. S/he has been found to have a good reason for not attending school through the fair hearing process.

REMINDER

LEARNFARE APPLIES ONLY TO AFDC TEENS WHO ARE:

-- AGE 13 THROUGH 19 AND,
-- WHO ARE PARENTS THEMSELVES OR WHO LIVE WITH THEIR NATURAL OR ADOPTIVE PARENTS AND,
-- WHO HAVE NOT GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL OR RECEIVED A HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY DIPLOMA.

FROM: CO DEPT OF SOCIAL SERV
111 N JEFFERSON STREET
PO BOX 22188
GREEN BAY   WI 54305

WORKER NAME AND PHONE NUMBER
ES SPECIALIST
414-448-4500
AGENCY PHONE NUMBER
414-436-3737

JAN 16, 1992
CASE NUMBER
399-50-8562

WORKER NUMBER
0545

NOTICE OF DECISION

TEST CASE
831 MATHER

GREEN BAY   WI 54303

DEAR TEST CASE

EFFECTIVE FEB 1, 1992, THE AMOUNT OF MONEY YOU WILL RECEIVE WILL BE CHANGED FROM $[illegible] TO $267.00 BECAUSE:
THE NUMBER OF PERSONS RECEIVING AID HAS DECREASED. (49.19(11)(A) STATS)
ONE OR MORE MEMBERS OF YOUR AFDC GROUP HAVE FAILED TO MEET THE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT IN SEC 49.50(7), WIS STATS. THE TEEN(S) NAME AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ARE SHOWN ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THIS LETTER.

UNDER WISCONSIN'S LEARNFARE PROGRAM, AFDC TEENS WHO MISS 10 OR MORE FULL DAYS WITHOUT AN EXCUSE DURING A SEMESTER, WHO CANNOT VERIFY THEIR ATTENDANCE DURING A SEMESTER, OR WHO DROP OUT AND RETURN TO SCHOOL DURING A SEMESTER, WILL HAVE THEIR ATTENDANCE MONITORED MONTHLY. TEENS WHO DROP OUT OF SCHOOL WITHOUT GOOD CAUSE AND TEENS WHO HAVE MORE THAN TWO FULL DAYS OF UNEXCUSED ABSENCE WITHOUT GOOD CAUSE DURING THE MONTH MONITORED WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE AFDC GRANT. YOU MAY CONTACT THE TEEN'S SCHOOL TO FIND OUT HOW MANY MISSED CLASSES IN A DAY EQUALS A "FULL DAY" OF ABSENCE.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE INFORMATION USED AS THE BASIS FOR REDUCING YOUR AFDC GRANT, CALL YOUR WORKER AT THE NUMBER LISTED ABOVE.

IF A TEEN IS HAVING PROBLEMS IN SCHOOL, THE PARENT OR TEEN MAY ASK THE SCHOOL TO REVIEW THE TEEN'S COURSES. THE PARENT OR TEEN MAY ASK THAT CHANGES BE MADE TO BETTER ADDRESS THE TEEN'S EDUCATIONAL NEEDS.
CONTACT DR. THOMAS JOYNT   IN YOUR SCHOOL AT (414) 448-2000
FOR MORE INFORMATION.

LEARNFARE CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES ARE ALSO AVAILABLE TO HELP WITH THE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROBLEM. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT LEARNFARE CASE MANAGEMENT,
CONTACT JULIE POSTOSKI   AT (414) 435-7561.
IF A CHILD IN YOUR CUSTODY IS NOT INCLUDED ON YOUR AFDC GRANT AND THERE IS A CHILD SUPPORT ORDER FOR THAT CHILD, YOU MAY BE ENTITLED TO RECEIVE ANY SUPPORT COLLECTED FOR THAT CHILD FOR MONTHS S/HE IS NOT INCLUDED ON YOUR GRANT. CALL THE CLERK OF COURT IN THE COUNTY WHERE YOUR SUPPORT ORDER WAS ENTERED IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS.

WE HAVE DETERMINED THAT TEST TEEN   IS NOT ENROLLED IN SCHOOL OR HAS DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL. WE HAVE ALSO DETERMINED THAT GOOD CAUSE DOES NOT EXIST OR THAT YOU HAVE FAILED TO RESPOND TO OUR REQUEST TO VERIFY GOOD CAUSE. SEE THE REVERSE SIDE OF THIS NOTICE FOR LEARNFARE GOOD CAUSE AND EXEMPTION REASONS.

THEREFORE, EFFECTIVE 02/01/92, TEST TEEN   WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE AFDC CASE BECAUSE S/HE FAILED TO MEET THE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT WITHOUT GOOD CAUSE. (SEC. 49.50(7), WIS STATS.) S/HE CAN BE RETURNED TO THE AFDC CASE WHEN YOU PROVIDE VERIFICATION FROM THE SCHOOL THAT S/HE HAS BEEN ENROLLED ONE MONTH (ASSUMING S/HE MEETS OTHER ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS) OR THAT GOOD CAUSE EXISTS FOR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL.

```
YOUR AFDC GROUP SIZE = 3; WEEKLY HOURS WORKED = 20; CHILD CARE FOR 0 CHILDREN =    0.00; FOOD STAMP GROUP SIZE = 4;
    $[illegible] USED FOR UTILITIES; $234.00 PAID FOR HOUSING; CHILD CARE =       0.00; GROUP PREGNANCIES = 0; MA GROUP SIZE = 3

A F D C  WAIVER GROUP A                     100 HOUR RULE GROUP B
ALL INCOME REPORTED          [illegible]    STANDARD OF NEED          [illegible]
AFDC INCOME LIMIT            [illegible]    AFDC PAYMENT                   517.00
EARNED INCOME REPORTED       [illegible]    - BUDGETABLE INCOME       [illegible]
- WORK EXPENSE DISREGARD           90.00    = UNROUNDED GRANT         [illegible]
- 30 AND 1/3 DISREGARD              0.00    - CENTS                   [illegible]
- DEPENDENT CARE                    0.00    = GRANT AMOUNT                 267.00
+ UNEARNED INCOME                   0.00    - RECOVERY AMT            [illegible]
- EXEMPT INCOME              [illegible]    = MONTHLY CHECK           [illegible]
= BUDGETABLE INCOME          [illegible]

F O O D   S T A M P S
TOTAL INCOME REPORTED              [illegible]    NET INCOME LIMIT          1117.00
FOOD STAMP INCOME LIMIT            [illegible]    ALLOTMENT                  201.00
EARNED INCOME REPORTED             [illegible]    - RECOUPMENT          [illegible]
+ UNEARNED INCOME                       267.00    = NET ALLOTMENT       [illegible]
- EXCESS MEDICAL EXPENSE                  0.00
- EARNED INCOME DEDUCTION                65.00
- STANDARD DEDUCTION                    122.00
- DEPENDENT CARE DEDUCTION                0.00
- SHELTER DEDUCTION                [illegible]
= NET INCOME                       [illegible]
```

*** SEE THE BACK OF THIS NOTICE FOR YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES. ***

YOU RECEIVE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE: Be sure to sign ur check exactly the same as your name appears on the ce of the check. Please call us if you have any questions out your check.

YOU RECEIVE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE: Your Medical Assistance card must be presented to your physician, hospi- druggist, dentist, etc., each time you go to them for edical service. For certain medical services, you may be quired to pay a copayment to your medical provider. The nount of the copayment will depend on the cost of the edical service you receive. Your medical service pro- der should tell you if a copayment is required or if a spe- c medical service is not covered by the Medical Assistance program. We will be glad to answer any questions u may have about the Medical Assistance benefits you ceive.

U HAVE THE RIGHT to request a hearing concerning any tion taken by this agency. The State Department of alth and Social Services does not always have to give u a hearing. If you are appealing an automatic AFDC ant change or adjustment required by state or federal w, your appeal may be dismissed.

U MAY APPEAL IN WRITING OR IN PERSON. To appeal person, go to the office shown on your Notice of Decision ter. To submit a written request for a fair hearing, send ur request to your local agency or to the State Department of Health and Social Services, Office of Administrative arings, P.O. Box 7875, Madison, WI 53707. Your request st be received *within 45* days of the effective date of the tion which you are appealing if the action affects AFDC or dical Assistance benefits. Your request must be re- ved by your local agency or the Office of Administrative arings *within 90* days of the effective date of any action en if the action affects Food Stamp benefits.

U HAVE THE RIGHT to a written notice from this agency fore any action is taken that will stop or reduce your ben- s. That notice will be mailed to you at least 10 days fore any action is taken. If you are appealing an action ecting your AFDC grant and your appeal is received fore the effective date of the agency's action, your AFDC nefits will not be reduced or stopped at least until the fair aring decision is made. Your AFDC grant may be anged during this time if another unrelated cause for nge occurs, in such an event, you will receive a new ice which may also be appealed if you are dissatisfied.

YOUR ARE APPEALING ONLY A MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TION taken because of a federal or state law requiring automatic change unfavorably affecting some or all dical Assistance recipients, your Medical Assistance efits will not be continued, and you may not be entitled hearing.

IF YOU ARE APPEALING ANY OTHER ACTION AFFECTING YOUR MEDICAL ASSISTANCE BENEFITS and you request a fair hearing during the 10 days before the effective date of the action, as stated on your Notice of Decision letter, your Medical Assistance benefits will be continued until the fair hearing decision is made.

IF YOU APPEAL AN ACTION AFFECTING YOUR FOOD STAMP BENEFITS *within 10 days AFTER* the effective date of that action, as stated on your Notice of Decision letter, your Food Stamp benefits will not be reduced or stopped until the fair hearing decision is made.

IF THE FAIR HEARING DECISION ORDERS that your aid be reduced or stopped, you may be required to repay any excess benefits you received while your appeal was pending.

AT ANY FAIR HEARING or conference you may represent yourself or be represented by an attorney, friend, relative or other person of your choice. We cannot pay for an attorney for you, but free legal advice may be available to you.* You can also retain a private attorney at your expense. You may contact the legal referral service in your community if you do not already have an attorney.

IF YOU FAIL TO APPEAR, OR IF YOUR REPRESENTATIVE FAILS TO APPEAR IN YOUR PLACE, without good cause, at your scheduled hearing, your appeal will be considered abandoned and will be dismissed.

GOOD REASONS FOR NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL

1. The teen is a parent and must stay home to take care of his or her newborn infant.
2. The teen is a parent and requires child care to attend school, but child care is not available.
3. The teen is a parent and requires transportation to and from the child care center, but neither public nor private transportation is available.
4. The teen is temporarily excused from attendance by the school district.
5. The teen is exempt from school attendance for religious reasons.
6. The teen is prohibited from attending school while she or he is in the process of being expelled from school.
7. The teen has been expelled from school and another school is not available.
8. The teen is age 16 through 19 and the school district determines that she or he will not graduate by age 20.
9. The teen does not attend school for one or more of these reasons:
   - Illness, injury, or incapacity of the teen or a family member.
   - Court appearance, in jail, prison, or juvenile secure detention
   - Doctor or dentist appointments for the teen or teen's child
   - A relative's or friend's death.
   - Observance of a religious holiday.
   - A family emergency.
   - Transportation breakdown.
   - Suspension from school
   - Any circumstance beyond the teen's control
10. The teen has been found to have a good reason for not attending school through the fair hearing process

REMINDER

Learnfare applies only to AFDC teens who are

- Age 13 through 19 and,
- Who are parents themselves or who live with their natural or adoptive parent and,
- Who have not graduated from high school or received a high school equivalency diploma.

EVEN IF YOU ARE NOT ELIGIBLE for public assistance, help in obtaining or continuing child support payments is available. Contact your Social Services or Welfare Department to find out where you can get more information about this.

YOU HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY to tell us within 10 days of any change in your circumstances. To do this, you can use the "Change Report" form which we gave you when you applied or were recertified, or you can tell your worker about changes by telephone or in person.

IF YOU RECEIVE BENEFITS, you must follow the rules listed below:

- Do not give false information, or hide information, to get or continue to get benefits.
- Do not trade or sell Food Stamps, Medical Assistance cards, identification cards, etc.
- Do not alter cards to get benefits you are not entitled to receive.
- Do not use Food Stamps to buy ineligible items, such as alcoholic beverages and tobacco.
- Do not use someone else's Food Stamps, Medical Assistance card, identification card, etc.

Any member of your household who intentionally breaks any of these rules can be barred from the Food Stamp program for six months after the first violation, 12 months after the second violation and permanently after the third violation. That individual could also be fined up to $10,000, imprisoned up to five years, or both. In addition, another suspension of up to 18 months could be added onto the original suspension. Further prosecution under applicable federal laws is also possible.

Re. Federal Regulations
45 CFR 205.[illegible], 7 CFR 273,
42 CFR [illegible]
Wisconsin Statutes
[illegible]
[illegible]

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*Agencies providing free legal services in each county are listed in the Rights and Responsibilities pamphlet.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
Division of Economic Support
DES-   (11/93)

LEARNFARE EXCEPTION REPORT

CASE NAME: ______________________

COUNTY or TRIBAL AGENCY: ______________

CASE NUMBER: ______________________

☐ NEW REPORT
☐ CHANGE

TEEN'S NAME: ______________________

REPORT PERIOD:

TEEN'S SSN: ______________________

MONTH: ______________

TEEN SANCTIONED IN REPORT MONTH? YES ☐ NO ☐

YEAR: ______________

Complete the following information for the teen on the waiting list

SERVICE	SERVICE NOT OFFERED IN AREA	ACTUAL ELAPSED WAITING PERIOD (DAYS) 30-60	60-90	90 OR MORE	DATE of REQUEST for Service	DATE of REFERRAL for Service	DATE Service Actually BEGUN
Alternative Education							
AODA							
Mental Health Counseling							
Transportation							
Child Abuse/Neglect							
Teen Parent Planning							
Child Care							
OTHER:							

CASE MANAGER: ______________________

DATE: ______________

RETURN THIS REPORT TO THE BUREAU OF WELFARE INITIATIVES BY THE 10TH OF EACH MONTH.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE LEARNFARE EXCEPTION REPORT

Complete this report at the end of each month a teen/family has been on a services waiting list for 30 days. Complete this report for one month only if you are indicating a service is not offered in the community rather than not immediately available.

1. Enter the case name and social security number.
2. Enter the teen's name and social security number.
3. Indicate by checking "yes" or "no" as to whether the teen was sanctioned in the report month.
4. Enter your County of Tribal agency.
5. Indicate whether this is a new report or a change in waiting list status
6. Enter the report month and year.
7. At the end of each month starting with the month in which the 30 day wait ended, indicate beside each planned service the number of days the teen/family waited for the service to begin.
8. Enter the date each service was requested by the teen/family.
9. Enter the date the teen/family was referred for each service.
10. Enter the date each service actually began.
11. Sign and date the report.
12. Send the report by the 10th of the month following the report month to:

Division of Economic Support
Bureau of Welfare Initiatives
Room 350
P.O. Box 7935
Madison, WI 53707-7935

APPENDIX 3

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES
Division of Economic Support
DES- (11/93)

LEARNFARE CASE MANAGEMENT MONTHLY REPORT

COUNTY/TRIBAL AGENCY: ____________________

REPORT MONTH: ____________________

YEAR: ____________________

I. Teens/families served by Learnfare Case Management

A. Number of new teens/families requesting case management in this month A. ________

1. Sanctioned teens ________
2. Teens on monthly monitoring ________
3. Teens with good cause ________
4. Teens in other status (e.g., ST, UV) ________

B. Of those new teens/families in #1 requesting case management, enter the number of new teens/families receiving case management in this month B. ________

1. Sanctioned teens ________
2. Teens on monthly monitoring ________
3. Teens with good cause ________
4. Teens in other status (e.g., ST, UV) ________

C. Number of ongoing teens/families receiving case management this month C. ________

1. Sanctioned teens ________
2. Teens on monthly monitoring ________
3. Teens with good cause ________
4. Teens in other status (e.g., ST, UV) ________

II. Number of teens served in this report month by other than Learnfare Case Manager (if known) ________

____________________ ____________________
CASE MANAGER'S SIGNATURE DATE

APPENDIX VII

Brown County
Learnfare Case Management Profile

Presanction activities are performed by staff of the Brown County Department of Social Services' economic support division. The county's youth aids division identifies teenagers eligible for case management services for the contracted county Learnfare case management agency, Our Lady of Charity, Inc. Family Programs (OLC), a family counseling center.

OLC assigns one counselor (0.3 FTE) to activities related to Learnfare. This case manager extends offers of case management services, meets with clients who accept offers, develops family assessments, and identifies services to address the problems preventing the teenager from regularly attending school.

In CY 1992, Brown County spent $4,382 of its $26,873 in supplemental Learnfare case management funding. For CY 1993, Brown County was allocated $28,992; spending through November 1993 totaled $8,191.

Learnfare Teenagers with Reported Attendance Problems

As indicated by a Learnfare status of "monitored," sanctioned," or "good cause," 255 teenagers were reported to have attendance problems for at least one month during our study period. Of these teenagers, 60.8 percent were female, and 29 percent were heads of households.

As of January 1, 1993, the average age of teenagers with attendance problems was 16.2 years:

Age	Distribution
13	8.2
14	14.1
15	13.3
16	14.1
17	23.6
18	14.5
19	11.4
20	0.8

Review Procedures and General Findings

For our review, we randomly selected 55 cases, or 22 percent of the teenagers who were to be referred to OLC under county policies. Records were located for 43 cases. As of August 31, 1993,

7 case records contained evidence that assessments had been performed:

3	open and active
4	closed—client uncooperative or withdrew

36 case records contained no evidence that assessments had been performed:

5	offers in progress
15	client refused services
10	offers ceased—no response
2	offers ceased—improved Learnfare status
2	offers ceased—client became ineligible
2	status not clear

We reviewed 50 additional cases, interviewed OLC and Brown County staff, and reviewed documents pertaining to the policies and procedures adopted for case management in Brown County. We also attempted to interview a group of Learnfare clients but were not able to do so because none of the clients invited by the case manager attended the interview session.

The procedures and quality of case management in Brown County differed distinctly between the early and later parts of our study period because two different OLC counselors performed case management duties. The current case manager assumed Learnfare responsibilities in March 1993, at which point cases were documented more clearly and handled more thoroughly and consistently than they had been earlier.

Presanction Procedures

In July 1992, the Department and Legal Action's review of Brown County's presanction procedures found several deficiencies, including:

- failure to provide prior-semester dates of unexcused absences when the basis for monthly monitoring was ten or more absences in the most recently completed semester;
- incomplete information on presanction forms mailed to clients;
- in some cases, presenting clients with only the number of days absent in the previous month and not absence dates; and
- incomplete documentation of client response to the presanction notice.

In response, Brown County submitted a corrective action plan and adopted other procedures, which include:

- developing a training program to ensure that economic support staff are able to correctly complete the required presanction forms;
- expanding the economic support division training specialists' role in Learnfare training for county staff; and
- requiring each economic support management staff person to assist and act as a resource for five or six line staff.

County Offers of Case Management

Brown County's policy is to make individual offers of case management services to all teenagers with reported attendance problems. To identify these teenagers, the County relies on the state-generated monthly case management report, which lists each teenager coded as "monitored," "sanctioned," or "good cause."

County policy requires the case manager to send the first offer of case management services one week after receiving the teenagers' names. Families are given two weeks to respond to initial offer letters; if they do not, the case manager is required to attempt personal contact either by telephone or by visit to the potential clients' homes. The county requires the case manager to make face-to-face contact with prospective Learnfare clients before discontinuing attempts to involve the family in case management.

The first OLC case manager appears to have offered case management services primarily by mail and not to have attempted face-to-face contact with families who did not respond to the initial letter. Of the 43 cases included in our sample, 9 were closed after this case manager sent one letter. Two other cases were closed after one letter and a telephone call. However, in more recent cases, the county's policy appears to have been followed more consistently.

OLC used a standard letter to make the initial offer of case management services. However, clients rarely responded to this letter, which had a formal tone and was difficult for potential clients to understand. Since the end of our study period, OLC staff have created a new offer letter in six versions to address different family situations.

Family Assessments

The assessment process also changed during the 1992-93 school year. The first case manager's assessments often consisted of notes taken during conversations with a teenager or parent. Since March, the current case manager has been initiating services by performing assessments of family needs relating to the teenagers' school attendance problems, for which interviews are conducted with families in their homes. An assessment consists of questions related to the student's history of truancy behavior, the family's understanding of the problem, previously attempted solutions, other concerns the family may have regarding alcohol and other drug abuse or delinquent behavior, and family members' thoughts on potential services they believe would help them in addressing the school attendance problem.

The case manager may also contact the school about services provided to the family, as well as to determine whether school officials believe the family could benefit from a specific service. However, the case manager primarily relies on the family to report any ongoing services with which it is involved.

Service Plans

Family counseling appears to be a frequently identified need for Brown County teenagers. In four of the seven cases in our sample that included service plans, it was identified as a need. In addition, we observed five cases not included in our sample in which service plans also identified a need for family counseling. Referrals are made to in-home family therapy at OLC, the County's contracted provider for such services.

Education-related service needs were identified in 12 of the 26 service plans either in our sample or in additional files we reviewed. When such service needs are identified, either participation in a GED/High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED) preparation program is recommended, or the case manager intervenes on behalf of the student in the teenager's school. Older teenagers are provided information about GED/HSED instruction at Northeastern Wisconsin Technical College; the teenagers are expected to enroll in the program, but the case manager provides assistance if requested.

When the teenager is too young to enroll in a such a program or when the case manager determines the teenager is having a conflict with school officials, the case manager will meet with school officials on behalf of the teenager to develop arrangements suitable to the teenager. These arrangements might include a schedule of half days, where the student will come earlier and leave earlier than the rest of the student body, or instruction in a self-contained classroom.

Brown County staff believe the county generally has sufficient services available to address most of the problems that could prevent teenagers from attending school. However, when asked about the availability of services, county and school district staff cited inadequate options for alternative education. As in other counties, GED/HSED preparation programs are limited to teenagers who are 17 years or older; however, in Brown County no other organized alternative education programs are available.

Monitoring and Follow-Up

For most of the 1992-93 school year, there was little or no monitoring of open cases in Brown County. The first case manager did not contact the teenager or service providers to see if services were addressing the problems identified in the assessment when an assessment had been completed.

Since March, there has been more oversight of active cases by the current case manager, who attempts to contact active cases every four to six weeks. These contacts are usually conversations with the family regarding the services prescribed. However, the current case manager does not routinely verify student statements regarding service participation. If the teenager has been referred to OLC in-home family therapy, the case manager occasionally attends counseling sessions with the family and periodically contacts the counselor concerning the status of the case.

Additional Observations

Although the county's procedures for providing case management services improved during our study period, much of the change can be attributed to the efforts of the current OLC case manager. County staff did not provide sufficient oversight or direction regarding case management services by reviewing the case manager's activities to ensure that face-to-face contact with potential clients was made before service efforts ceased, as required by the case management contract. In addition, county staff did not review assessments completed by the case manager to ensure they were of sufficient quality to adequately identify problems preventing teenagers from attending school.

Reimbursement mechanisms included in Brown County's contract with the case management agency provided some guidance to the agency regarding expectations of case management activities. The agency is reimbursed on the basis of individual activities, such as $40 for each assessment performed and $10 for each attempted home visit.

Summary

In general, since March 1993, Brown County has adequately implemented a process to provide case management services to Learnfare teenagers. Although the County used only a small portion of its case management allocation, it has developed thorough case management procedures, which include requirements for face-to-face contact with all potential clients and in-home assessments involving entire families. In addition, the current case manager's practice of contacting the family regularly after assessment was among the most reliable we observed in any county.

To improve case management services in Brown County:

- The county and the case management agency could adopt additional written procedures that describe the expectations and goals of case management services, in accordance with the *Learnfare Case Management Manual* to be distributed by the Department.
- In light of any revised procedures, and considering that the County has not previously spent available allocations of case management funds, the potential Learnfare case management workload could be examined jointly by the County and the contracted agency, to determine the appropriate staffing level to be devoted to Learnfare case management.
- Brown County could improve oversight by reviewing the case manager's activities to determine whether expectations of Learnfare case management services are being met.

****

APPENDIX VIII

Dane County
Learnfare Case Management Profile

Presanction activities are performed by Dane County Department of Human Services economic support specialists, who verify attendance and conduct good-cause interviews. The County and the Urban League of Greater Madison, Inc., a contracted provider, share responsibilities for Learnfare case management.

The county Learnfare coordinator provides a list of names to the contracted provider after determining whether the teenagers are involved in ongoing county social services cases addressing their attendance problems. If they are not, or if the assigned social worker expresses no objection, the case is referred to the Urban League. During most of our study period, the League's case management staff included one part-time case manager and one part-time case management supervisor.

Dane County's allocation of supplementary Learnfare case management funding was $28,980 in CY 1992 and $30,956 in CY 1993. Most of this funding, $19,599 in 1992 and $19,991 in 1993, was designated for the Urban League, where it supported .79 FTE position. In both years, a portion of case management funding also partially supported the Dane County Learnfare coordinator: $9,381 in CY 1992, and $10,965 in CY 1993.

Learnfare Teenagers with Reported Attendance Problems

As indicated by a Learnfare status of "monitored," "sanctioned," or "good cause," 384 teenagers were reported to have attendance problems for at least one month during our study period. Of these, 62.2 percent were female, and 22.9 percent were heads of households.

As of January 1, 1993, the average age of teenagers with reported attendance problems was 16.0 years:

Age	Distribution
13	8.9
14	15.9
15	15.9
16	17.4
17	17.9
18	13.0
19	10.2
20	0.8

The Learnfare status of teenagers reported to have attendance problems in Dane County is distorted by attendance-reporting practices of the Madison Metropolitan School District, in which most of Dane County's AFDC population resides. Citing confidentiality concerns, the district reports perfect attendance almost exclusively for all teenagers on monthly monitoring. As a result, monitored teenagers in Dane County are rarely sanctioned for attendance problems.

Review Procedures and General Findings

Of the 384 teenagers with reported attendance problems, 159 were excluded from study consideration because they did not meet criteria for Dane County's target population, which includes:

- sanctioned teenagers;
- monitored teenagers under age 15;
- teenage heads of households; and
- pregnant teenagers.

From the remaining 225 teenagers, we randomly selected a 20 percent sample, or 45 cases, for review. Some teenagers in the target population may have been excluded from sample consideration because we had no way to determine whether any older, monitored teenagers were pregnant.

Records were located for 19 of the 45 cases in our sample. As of August 31, 1993,

5 case records contained evidence that Learnfare assessments had been performed:

1	open and active
1	open but inactive
1	closed—improved Learnfare status
1	closed—client became ineligible
1	status not clear

14 case records had no evidence of a Learnfare assessment:

3	clients were already receiving services from the contracted agency
5	no response to recent offers
3	client refused services
2	offers ceased—no response
1	agency had not located client

We also reviewed 18 cases selected by the Urban League. Four of these had also been selected in our random sample and are included in our calculations; the others were included in our qualitative observations only. In addition, we reviewed Dane County's annual plans for Learnfare case management, contracts with the Urban League, and the county Learnfare coordinator's records relating to the assignment of all cases and monitoring of Urban League activity.

We interviewed the Dane County Learnfare coordinator, staff of the Urban League, and a county social work supervisor. We did not interview teenagers because timely arrangements could not be made with Urban League staff.

Presanction Procedures

In December 1992, the Department and Legal Action's joint review of Dane County's Learnfare activities found four deficiencies:

- incomplete documentation of presanction review procedures;
- inconsistent documentation of presanction contacts between county staff and clients and incomplete documentation of good-cause determinations;

- inappropriate sanctioning of teenagers with newborns less than 45 days old; and
- inappropriate use of the same unexcused absences as the basis for both monthly monitoring and sanctions.

To address these problem areas, Dane County:

- provided additional training to economic support workers;
- distributed the deficiencies report to economic support supervisors for review;
- enlisted each economic support supervisor to review one case per worker per month, as well as cases transferred to his or her unit; and
- selected a random sample of files for internal quality control review.

County Offers of Case Management

As noted, Dane County has established priority groups to receive offers of case management services. After these groups have been served, the coordinator may refer other teenagers, although we observed only one such referral.

Each month, the Learnfare coordinator identifies those teenagers with attendance problems who also meet Dane County's priority criteria. The coordinator refers to county social service records to identify any ongoing services these teenagers may be receiving and checks with the assigned county social worker before referring the case to the Urban League for additional case management. Of the 229 teenagers from which we drew our sample, 28 cases were referred to county social workers for Learnfare case management.

During our study period, when the Urban League case management supervisor received the list of new referrals, she identified teenagers who were already receiving services from the League's School Age Parent (SAP) program. Services for these cases were handled by the SAP case manager. The League's case management supervisor then initiated contact with the remaining teenagers through a letter of introduction. In the cases we observed, 3 were retained by the SAP case managers, and 16 were offered Learnfare case management.

Urban League written policies do not prescribe any specific methods or levels of effort for offering case management services. We observed that either the case management supervisor or the case manager followed the letter of introduction with a second letter scheduling a home visit. Teenagers who did not keep the scheduled appointment and did not contact the Urban League within two weeks received a third letter. If a teenager did not respond, one final letter was mailed as notification that no further offers would be advanced. The county Learnfare coordinator was notified at the same time.

Family Assessments

During the initial home visit for Learnfare case management, case managers collect family information and complete a profile or assessment of the teenager. Usually both the teenager and parent(s) are present to answer the case manager's questions.

However, during our study period the forms used to record assessments changed, and four different people conducted assessments, each using different methods. The use of different forms and the changes in staff, in part, account for the inconsistent quality of the assessments. During the study period, the County's Learnfare coordinator began to require monthly reports and client updates. Urban League staff and county staff developed a "Learnfare Family Assessment" form that includes information on client contact, planned and received services, and the roles of the case head, teenager, and case manager. Although the form was intended as a summary, in practice it has replaced the more thorough assessment form.

Learnfare teenagers receiving case management through the SAP program had more thorough assessments. In two of the three cases we observed, SAP assessments included information about the teenagers' families, education, and social services history. In the third SAP case, the assessment provided was not as thorough.

Service Plans

Teenagers receiving case management through the SAP program were referred for services. Case managers scheduled and accompanied teenagers to appointments. However, Learnfare case managers generally did not make many referrals for services. The five cases with Learnfare assessments contained no referrals for outside service, even when the case manager had noted that the teenager or a parent could benefit from service. Most often the case manager identified support and encouragement as the teenager's need.

Contracted case management agency staff could, however, comment on service availability in Dane County: staff reported that alternative education, parenting skill training, transportation, child care, and alcohol and other drug treatment are the services most in demand in Dane County, and that alcohol and drug treatment services were not adequately available. They were not aware of the requirement that exception reports be filed when recommended services were not available.

Monitoring and Follow-Up

The contracted agency does not have a written policy for monitoring or follow-up with clients: these practices are left to the discretion of the Learnfare case manager. In two of the five cases, the case manager planned to have regular contact with the teenager, and in one of the five cases the case manager checked school attendance regularly.

Additional Observations

Although the Urban League appears to have a relatively well-developed SAP program, the quality of Learnfare case management appears to have been impaired by turnover among Learnfare case managers and lack of written policies and procedures for Learnfare case management. For most of our study period, the Urban League's Learnfare program had either the case manager position or case management supervisor position vacant. During the 12 months in our study period, the Learnfare case manager position was vacant for 4 months, and the case management supervisor position was vacant for 3 months.

Summary

Dane County's practice of communicating with assigned social workers on existing cases before referral for Learnfare case management may have avoided some duplication of services and provided previously assigned social workers with necessary additional information. The contracted case management agency's similar practice of checking for participation in the SAP program before offering additional services may have had similar benefits. In addition, the service provided through the SAP appears to be thorough and aggressive.

To improve Learnfare case management in Dane County:

- County staff and staff of the contracted case management agency could adopt comprehensive goals for Learnfare case management, based on the *Learnfare Case Management Manual* to be issued by the Department. They could likewise devise training procedures to ensure that new case managers understand requirements and expectations.

- In the light of any revised procedures, the potential Learnfare case management workload could be examined jointly by Dane County and Urban League staff, to determine appropriate staffing levels and define the group of teenagers to receive priority services.

- The County and the contracted case management agency could devise procedures by which those teenagers who remain with their current social workers or case managers receive similar services, and ensure that those case workers are aware of the requirements and expectations for Learnfare case management.

- Dane County could seek to determine the causes of high turnover at the contracted agency, and either address them or contract with a new provider.

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APPENDIX IX

Douglas County
Learnfare Case Management Profile

Organization of Case Management Services

Presanction activities, including preparing and mailing presanction notices, conducting good-cause reviews, and verifying disputed attendance reports, are performed by the Douglas County Department of Human Services' economic support division. Job Service of Superior has contracted to provide Learnfare case management services.

Case management services are provided by 0.3 FTE Job Service staff. While supplemental Learnfare case management funds for Douglas County were $17,593 in CY 1992 and $18,874 in CY 1993, Job Service of Superior had received only $1,546 for 1992 and $2,112 as of November 1993 because of the limited number of billable hours submitted.

In addition to Learnfare case management services, a unique Teen Parent Self-Sufficiency program is available through the Superior School District, supported largely with federal funds. This program provides case management, nutrition, and health assistance to Learnfare teenagers with children and began functioning midway through our study period.

Learnfare Teenagers with Reported Attendance Problems

As indicated by a Learnfare status of "monitored," "sanctioned," or "good cause," 85 teenagers were reported to have attendance problems for at least one month during the 1992-93 school year. Of these, 63.5 percent were female, and 28.2 percent were heads of households.

As of January 1, 1993, the average age of teenagers with reported attendance problems was 16.7 years:

Age	Distribution
13	5.9
14	7.0
15	9.4
16	20.0
17	23.5
18	21.2
19	10.6
20	2.4

Review Procedures and General Findings

We requested case information for all 85 teenagers with reported attendance problems and were provided with records for 11 cases. The case manager may have extended more individual offers and created files only when clients responded. As of August 31, 1993, 3 case records contained evidence that assessments were performed:

2	open but inactive
1	closed—no reason given

8 case records contained no evidence that assessments had been performed:

1	offers in progress
4	client refused services
1	offers ceased—no response
1	offers ceased—client became ineligible
1	status not clear

The number of teenagers receiving case management services may be lower than we anticipated because of the Superior School District's Teen Parent program, which provides services similar to Learnfare case management to AFDC teenagers with children. Program staff from the Superior School District identified 14 students from our list of Learnfare-eligible teenagers as having received ongoing services through their program since January 1993. One of these teenagers also received Learnfare case management services, and one had some contact with the case manager although no assessment or service plan was completed. The remaining 12 teenagers had no contact with the Learnfare case manager.

We interviewed the contracted case manager and the County's economic support supervisor, but because only a small number of teenagers received Learnfare case management services, we were unable to conduct a group interview with teenagers.

The Presanction Process

Presanction notices were sent to 38 teenagers during our study period. Douglas County's presanction activities have not been subject to on-site review by the Department and Legal Action of Wisconsin. However, the Department's regional administrator visited the County in early 1993 and identified one significant problem with the presanction process, involving a lack of proper documentation for attendance verification and determination of good cause. The regional administrator recommended use of the official "Attendance and Exemption/Good Cause" form, and in April 1993, the County stated it would use the recommended form and include a copy in each sanctioned teenager's file.

Offers of Case Management

Douglas County's written policy states that case management will be made available to all Learnfare teenagers with reported attendance problems. In accordance with state policy, sanctioned teenagers are to receive first priority for services.

County economic support staff notify the contracted case manager of reported attendance problems by forwarding a copy of each presanction notice. The case manager is responsible for identifying other priority teenagers, such as those on monthly monitoring, using the state-generated monthly case management report, which lists each teenager coded as "monitored," "sanctioned," or "good cause." The case manager reports progress with any teenager back to the County.

County policy requires the case manager to offer case management services to Learnfare teenagers through written correspondence, telephone contacts, home visits, and other social service providers. Offers are to be made both to teenagers receiving presanction notices and to others with reported attendance problems.

However, the case manager indicated this policy had not been strictly followed during the 1992-93 school year. Documentation does not exist, but the case manager reported that in most instances, individual letters offering case management services were mailed to sanctioned teenagers. However, in some cases teenagers or their parents contacted the case manager before a letter was mailed, and some sanctioned teenagers received no contact other than the presanction notice.

Teenagers on monthly monitoring did not receive either letters introducing the case manager or any other formal offers of case management from the case manager during the time period under evaluation. The case manager described a mass mailing to all eligible teenagers during the summer months of 1992; however, no response was received as a result of this effort, so no additional letters have been issued. The case manager also reported that previous efforts to offer case management over the telephone have been ineffective.

As a consequence of these practices, the number of teenagers receiving an offer of case management was significantly less than the 50 to 60 estimated in the County's annual plan. The County extended no offers to teenagers on monthly monitoring; based on the case manager's statements and available documentation, we estimate that 31 of the 38 Douglas County teenagers who received presanction notices received an additional letter offering case management.

Assessments

Three of the 11 cases in which clients appeared to have contact with the case manager contained service plans, but no assessments were recorded. The case manager indicated that assessments relating to family issues and a wide range of possible needs were not expected as part of her job. Instead, the case manager described her role as being an intermediary between the schools and the teenager to resolve issues relating to appropriate placement and attendance.

Service Plans

One service plan completed during the 1992-93 school year applied to two cases—a married teenage couple. The other was for a 19-year-old teenage mother. The service plans included steps consistent with the case manager's statements that she acts as an advocate for the Learnfare teenager. In both service plans, the case manager encouraged the teenagers to enroll in the local technical college.

Because Douglas County did not complete assessments and there were service plans for only three cases, it is difficult to comment on the availability of needed services. However, county staff and the case manager indicated a shortage of alternative education options. Two of the cases we reviewed, which did not contain service plans or exception reports, noted a waiting list of 30 students at one alternative education facility.

Monitoring and Follow-Up

Monitoring clients' progress after adoption of a service plan is limited. The case manager indicated that she may contact schools to determine whether a teenager has enrolled, but subsequent contact is generally expected to be initiated by the client. There is no written policy or standard for when a case should be closed, although the case manager stated that cases are typically closed when 60 days have elapsed without contact from the client.

Additional Observations

In interviews, the Learnfare case manager and county staff reported that coordination among service providers and the schools was relatively easy and effective, based on the small population of the county. The case manager reported receiving ready cooperation from school officials when their assistance was requested.

Summary

Case management services in Douglas County may benefit from good communication and cooperation among service providers. The existence of a supportive school-age parents program in the high school, accompanied by the provision of day care and transportation to Learnfare teenagers outside formal case management, may serve to keep demand for Learnfare case management lower than it would otherwise be.

To improve Learnfare case management in Douglas County:

- County staff and staff of the contracted case management agency could adopt comprehensive case management procedures, based on the *Learnfare Case Management Manual* to be issued by the Department. These procedures should include all steps for the case management process, from making offers to conducting follow-up activities and closing cases.
- In light of any revised procedures, and considering that the County has not previously spent available allocations of case management funds, the potential Learnfare case management workload could be examined jointly by the County and the contracted agency to determine appropriate case management staffing levels.
- Douglas County could exercise more frequent and more thorough oversight of the contracted case management agency to determine whether all expectations are being fulfilled.

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APPENDIX X

Eau Claire County
Learnfare Case Management Profile

Both presanction procedures and case management services are assigned to staff of the Eau Claire County Department of Human Services. Economic support specialists are responsible for presanction activities; intake staff of the family services unit extend case management offers and perform assessments, and social workers provide case management. While no teenagers received case management in Eau Claire County as a result of Learnfare referral, some Learnfare teenagers received case management and social services as a result of their families' involvement in delinquency, truancy, protective services, or other actions at the time of their Learnfare referral.

No staff were specifically dedicated to Learnfare services during our study period. Since then, one economic support supervisor has been assigned responsibility for oversight of presanction responsibilities. Eau Claire County was allocated and spent $5,465 in supplemental Learnfare case management funding for CY 1992, and $5,821 for CY 1993.

Learnfare Teenagers with Reported Attendance Problems

As indicated by a Learnfare status of "monitored," "sanctioned," or "good cause," 85 teenagers were reported to have attendance problems for at least one month during the 1992-93 school year. Of these, 51.8 percent were female, and 15.3 percent were heads of households.

As of January 1, 1993, the average age of teenagers with reported attendance problems was 15.8 years:

Age	Distribution
12	1.1%
13	10.5
14	11.8
15	20.0
16	22.4
17	16.5
18	11.8
19	5.9

Review Procedures and General Findings

We requested case information for all 85 teenagers with attendance problems. No Learnfare case management activity was initiated in 63 cases. As of August 31, 1993, 22 case records showed activity:

12	included family assessments prepared before Learnfare referral as a result of other county programs
4	client refused services
3	offers ceased—no response
1	offers ceased—client became ineligible
2	status not clear

We reviewed four additional files of teenagers who received services because the County identified them as at risk of poor attendance. However, because these teenagers were not yet assigned a Learnfare status indicating an attendance problem, they were not included in our analysis.

We interviewed staff of the Eau Claire County Department of Human Services, including the director and deputy director, and the supervisors for family services, economic support, and intake services. Because no teenagers received Learnfare case management, we did not interview any teenagers.

Presanction Procedures

In September 1992, the Department reviewed presanction procedures in Eau Claire County and identified problems related to the inconsistent treatment of sanctioned teenagers. Primary findings concerned sanctions issued prior to performance or completion of the presanction review process. County staff maintain that because many economic support workers are responsible for identifying attendance problems during application and six-month review or from monthly attendance reports, and because relatively few Learnfare sanctions are made in the County, staff's exposure to the Learnfare program is not adequate to maintain the necessary skills and knowledge. As a result, some teenagers were probably sanctioned without notice, and supplemental checks had to be issued.

The Department did not require a corrective action plan but did discuss its findings with Eau Claire County staff. In response to these discussions, the County changed its procedures to ensure all Learnfare teenagers will have their cases reviewed by a single economic support supervisor before sanctions are imposed. With this centralized review function, the County hopes to increase its level of expertise with the Learnfare program, reduce the number of errors, and increase accountability.

County Offers of Case Management Services

Eau Claire County Learnfare policies state that offers of case management should be extended to all AFDC teenagers for whom poor attendance has been reported; that these offers should be made by telephone or in writing; and that when made in writing, a follow-up letter will be mailed. However, during our study period we found that sanctioned teenagers did not receive personalized offers of case management services in addition to the offers printed on notice forms.

County staff informed us that teenagers on monthly monitoring were offered services by family services intake staff on only a few occasions during the school year, through the use of a customized form letter mailed to teenagers recently placed on monthly monitoring. File review confirmed that not all monitored teenagers received an offer of services. When the County did extend a written offer, we noted delays of approximately two months between the reported attendance problem and the mailing date. In only one case file did we find evidence that a second offer letter had been mailed. Staff report no families responded to these offers.

Assessments

Because no clients accepted the offers, no assessments were performed as Learnfare referrals. However, the assessments that had been received by Learnfare teenagers as a result of prior referrals to social services, such as truancy and delinquency actions, were thorough. These assessments included considerable family history information, problem identification, and specific service plans for all family members.

According to county staff, an inclusive practice of focusing on the entire family is used to fully address problems facing the teenager, better coordinate the delivery of services, and eliminate duplication. After county assessments are completed, referrals are frequently made to other professionals, such as medical and psychological evaluation specialists, vocational experts, and social services and school counselors, for additional evaluations.

An indicator of the thoroughness of Eau Claire County assessments is the number and range of needs identified for the teenagers and their families. Using our list of 14 areas of potential need, we found an average of 3.8 needs identified per case, in comparison to an average of 2.4 needs per case in all other counties. Needs were identified in 13 of the 14 areas we tabulated.

Service Plans

Since none of the Eau Claire County cases in our review were opened as a result of Learnfare, some service plans did not focus on the goal of returning to school but instead focused on other personal or family problems, which may relate to the teenager's attendance problem. However, in most of the cases we reviewed, the county caseworker noted the teenager was on AFDC and eligible to receive Learnfare funding to pay for recommended services.

Eau Claire County includes a broad range of services, and service providers, in its service plans. Of the 12 service plans we observed, 7 included some sort of court-related assistance, including one service to help teenagers get part-time work in order to make restitution payments. Six included referrals to family counseling, four to alcohol or other drug counseling, three to alternative education, and three to health providers.

Eau Claire was somewhat different from other counties in that only one service plan included child care, and two included transportation. County staff suggest the low numbers for child care referrals are probably attributable to the presence of alternative education programs and on-site day care in both of the larger public high schools in the Eau Claire School District.

Availability of Services

There were no exception reports in any of the reviewed files. County staff maintain that most service needs can be met by the County or other service providers. They mentioned limited space in some programs, such as an educational program for severely disturbed teenagers, but said that so far placement has not been an issue.

County staff indicated considerable satisfaction with the primary public school district in the area, noting its on-site alternative education and day-care programs. We also saw evidence in the files to suggest the schools are flexible in providing counseling and changing student schedules to meet individual needs. Staff said one high school and the nearby vocational college cooperate in jointly running the high school day-care center during evening alternative education classes conducted at the college.

Monitoring and Follow-Up

Caseworkers are responsible for monitoring cases as necessary. We saw evidence of frequent contact with teenagers, such as in preparing case histories and updating psychological or educational assessments. The caseworkers consistently updated assessments and service plans twice a year, at which time the case was reviewed by a supervisor. Once updated, a case remains open until the next scheduled review.

Summary

During our study period, no Learnfare teenagers received case management in Eau Claire County as a result of Learnfare status. However, the case management provided to Learnfare teenagers as a result of other referrals indicates the County could be capable of providing high-quality Learnfare case management.

To improve Learnfare case management in Eau Claire County:

- The County could extend individual offers of Learnfare case management to teenagers and their families who are not already involved with the Family Services Unit.
- The County could institute measures to ensure that assessments and service plans being provided to Learnfare teenagers as a result of prior referrals to social services consistently address the teenagers' attendance problems.

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APPENDIX XI

Kenosha County
Learnfare Case Management Profile

Presanction activities in Kenosha County have been shared by the County's economic support staff and the Children's Service Society of Wisconsin (CSSW), which also provides Learnfare case management under contract with the Kenosha County Department of Social Services. Both the county economic support unit and a network of community services providers called the Prevention Services Network, of which CSSW is a member, operate at the same location.

During our study period, the responsibility of county economic support staff was limited to identifying sanctioned teenagers at application and review, providing their names to CSSW, and updating automated AFDC records to reflect Learnfare status as determined by CSSW staff. Economic support staff have since assumed responsibility for several presanction procedures previously performed by CSSW, including preparing presanction notices, handling responses to these notices, and making all final determinations on a teenager's Learnfare status. CSSW staff remain responsible for offering services, performing assessments, preparing service plans, and monitoring and following up on case management activities.

CSSW staff levels varied over the course of the 1992-93 school year but generally consisted of a supervisor, a program assistant, and two or three case managers. Kenosha County's supplementary Learnfare case management allocation and spending totaled $36,210 in CY 1992 and $39,641 in CY 1993. In addition, the County received $483,088 in federal funds during CY 1993, and provided a matching amount, as part of a multi-year project grant to provide client services, partially fund a Learnfare coordinator position within the Kenosha Unified School District, and administer case management.

Learnfare Teenagers with Reported Attendance Problems

As indicated by a Learnfare status of "monitored," "sanctioned," or "good cause," 422 teenagers were reported to have attendance problems for at least one month during the 1992-93 school year. Of these, 57.1 percent were female, and 25.6 percent were heads of households.

As of January 1, 1993, the average age of teenagers with reported attendance problems was 15.9 years:

Age	Distribution
12	0.8%
13	12.8
14	16.1
15	16.1
16	14.0
17	14.7
18	14.9
19	9.7
20	0.9

Review Procedures and General Findings

For our review, we randomly selected 87 teenagers, or just over 20 percent of the teenagers with reported attendance problems. Records were located for 66 cases. According to case management staff, the remaining files probably had no offers or activity during the year. As of August 31, 1993,

30 case records contained evidence that Learnfare assessments had been performed:

9	open and active
4	closed—client attained goals or improved Learnfare status
12	closed—client became ineligible
4	closed—client uncooperative or withdrew
1	closed—no reason noted

36 case records contained no evidence that assessments had been performed:

3	offers in progress
1	client refused services
23	offers ceased—no response
1	offers ceased—improved Learnfare status
5	offers ceased—client became ineligible
2	offers ceased—no reason noted
1	status not clear

In addition to the cases in our sample, we reviewed 67 non-sample files, which included other cases opened during the 1992-93 school year. These additional files were included in our qualitative review only.

Among the ten counties we evaluated, Kenosha County appeared to be the most successful in engaging clients in case management: 34 percent of the clients in our sample of that Kenosha County's target population received a Learnfare case management assessment at some time during the study period. Some services are also provided to Learnfare-eligible teenagers through more informal prevention and outreach components of the Prevention Services Network. When this occurs, Learnfare funds may be used to compensate these outreach programs, but formal case management does not take place.

We interviewed county staff involved with the delivery of case management, including the program director of the Prevention Services Network, the contracted case management supervisor, one case manager, and the county economic support supervisor. Discussions were also held with staff of the county's quality control unit, program evaluation staff, two service providers, and four teenage mothers who attended a group interview.

Presanction Procedures

In November 1992, the Department and Legal Action's joint review of Kenosha County's presanction procedures identified several problems related to proper notification, use of standard forms, coordination of activities between economic support and CSSW case managers, and documentation. Specifically, this review identified these deficiencies:

- insufficient documentation that a presanction review was completed before imposition of a sanction;
- use of non-standard presanction notices and good-cause forms, rather than those required;
- incomplete and sometimes unclear school attendance information provided to clients on presanction forms;
- incomplete documentation of the considerations that served as a basis for the decision to impose a sanction; and
- inconsistent suspension of sanctions for dropouts who do not meet attendance requirements because they are caring for newborns less than 45 days old.

County and Prevention Services Network staff prepared a corrective action plan that consolidates the presanction review process within the economic support unit. As a result, all notices will come from the same office, and the possibility that some teenagers will be missed or that procedures will be incorrectly followed is reduced. In addition, a new operations manual, which went into effect with the 1993-94 school year, was prepared.

County Offers of Case Management

The County's annual plan states that case management services will be offered to all teenagers with reported attendance problems. These teenagers are identified in two ways: through case managers' regular reviews of the state-generated monthly case management report, which lists each teenager coded as "monitored," "sanctioned," or "good cause," and through referrals by economic support workers and other service providers. Because the County's economic support unit and CSSW are located in the same building, teenagers are occasionally referred directly to a case manager for assessment and preparation of a service plan.

Sanctioned teenagers consistently received offers of case management during our study period. These offers were inviting, personalized cover letters attached to the presanction notice. Other teenagers, if referred by economic support or other service providers, were also offered case management, typically by letter. Staff stated that while teenagers on monthly monitoring were listed in the annual plan as a high priority, offers for services to them did not routinely occur because of workload concerns. Since the study period, the case management agency has adopted a practice of extending offers to all monitored teenagers.

Periodically, case management staff attempted to call or visit teenagers who did not respond to the offers of services, in order to schedule time to complete assessments. Refusal of services was usually determined through follow-up telephone calls, but in some cases during a face-to-face discussion at a teenager's home. According to written procedures, the family is also considered to have refused services if five offers have been made without a response.

Because several of the administrative tasks for presanction review have been transferred to the economic support unit, CSSW staff plan to hand-deliver their first offers of services to sanctioned teenagers during the 1993-94 school year, with hopes of increasing the rate of response.

Family Assessments

We reviewed 30 Learnfare assessments, which are generally comprehensive and include extensive information on family history and relationships, previous school and juvenile delinquency problems, prior counseling efforts, and the teenager's desires and personal goals. In a few instances, case files also include vocational assessments prepared by other professionals. Some Kenosha County assessments appear to have benefited from the county's well-developed network of service agencies, which allows effective consultation and referral.

Learnfare case managers frequently conduct structured interviews in a family's home and consult with school officials, and they routinely consult with other providers in the Prevention Services Network. During the study period, an average of 3.3 needs were identified for each case, in 12 of the 14 areas in which we expected case managers to find needs. However, no Kenosha County assessment identified family alcohol and drug problems or any need for advocacy. The most frequently identified needs were child care (14 cases), student counseling (14 cases), family counseling (13 cases), and alternative education (11 cases).

Service Plans

Service plans typically included two or three goals, such as good school attendance and cooperation with the case manager. Services are also offered to other family members, particularly in an effort to keep younger siblings in school.

Youth or family outreach services were the most frequently identified needs in family assessments and service plans. Of the 30 cases with service plans, 20 included some kind of outreach services, such as recreational or peer group activities, counseling, and parenting classes. While questions concerning serious counseling or crisis intervention needs, such as alcohol and other drug abuse or child abuse issues, are included in the assessment instrument, these issues were rarely documented by case managers or included in service plans.

It is not clear that absence of documentation always indicates an absence of services: in one case, we questioned a case manager about ambiguous notes in the file. She explained that she had identified the likelihood of sexual abuse in the home and referred the case to an appropriate authority, but in consideration of the teenager's confidentiality, did not want to document the identified problem in a case file that would be shared among several service providers and reviewed by auditors.

Exception reports were completed for eight sanctioned and monitored teenagers during fall 1992, when a youth outreach program was at capacity. CSSW staff indicated that the need to place teenagers on waiting lists for services is rare, and acceptable alternatives sometimes exist. One case manager described to us a period during which in-home family therapy, a common need for Learnfare teenagers, was not available. During this time, the case manager stated, the service was not included in service plans, and exception reports were not filed. Case managers also noted services provided through the school district were periodically unavailable because of funding problems; an evaluation report issued by Kenosha County in March 1993 also cited insufficient alternative education options.

Monitoring and Follow-Up

Case management staff meet weekly to discuss cases, make suggestions on how to proceed with those that are difficult, and decide when to close a case. Typically, cases are closed as a result of good attendance, graduation, or lack of cooperation with the case manager or other service provider, or when the AFDC case is closed. A case can remain open for up to three months after a teenager is no longer on AFDC, but justification, such as completion of GED study or other services already in progress, must be provided.

Kenosha County appears to have created procedures for continuing contact with clients at least once every 30 days, and in several cases we observed an exceptional level of effort to ensure that clients were referred to additional or alternative services when the original referral was less than satisfactory for the client.

However, reliable execution of these procedures was limited by a high rate of turnover among case managers during the study period. We saw evidence that some teenagers had at least three case managers during the school year. We also noted instances in which follow-up had to be initiated by the client rather than the case manager. CSSW staff note that reliance upon clients to initiate follow-up contact was a problem during the 1992-93 school year. To reduce turnover in the future, the agency has recently adjusted hiring practices for case managers, seeking candidates with Bachelor's rather than Master's degrees, and has obtained secure funding commitments through CY 1997.

Other Observations

Four teenage mothers accepted an invitation to participate in a group interview regarding case management services in Kenosha County. These teenagers described their Learnfare case managers as among the most accessible and helpful social service professionals they had encountered.

Staff of the Prevention Services Network completed several evaluations of Learnfare case management in Kenosha County. These evaluations represent the only analyses of program effectiveness we noted in any of the ten counties we reviewed. In early 1993, Kenosha County performed an outcome evaluation of Learnfare case management services. A summary report, released in December 1993, noted that primary barriers to school attendance included pregnancy, boredom, being too far behind in school, being needed at home for other reasons, lacking transportation and child care, and poor relationships with school staff.

Analyses performed for the summary report suggest case management had some positive effect on school attendance behavior, primarily as a result of eliminating logistical barriers and increasing counseling and other forms of emotional support. Finally, the report stated the obstacles to the provision of good case management continue to exist and include: 1) the interruption of services as teenagers go on and off AFDC, 2) the provision of case management services to older teenagers with serious school attendance problems rather than to younger teenagers at the onset of attendance problems, and 3) a lack of alternative education options.

Summary

Learnfare case management in Kenosha County was well developed during our study period; many teenagers received high-quality services as a result of their Learnfare referrals. This county's methods of referring teenagers to case managers and offering Learnfare case management have produced the highest response rate among the counties we observed. The organized network of service providers, located in the same building as the county's economic support services, supports reliable referrals to case managers and convenient consultation among providers.

To improve Learnfare case management in Kenosha County, the case management agency could institute measures to ensure that follow-up occurs as scheduled in each case, even in the event that the case manager has left.

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APPENDIX XII

Milwaukee County
Learnfare Case Management Profile

The Milwaukee County Department of Human Services contracts with Wee Care Day Care Nursery Centers, Inc., to provide both presanction and case management services. Wee Care's central staff track and refer teenagers to three other community-based agencies with which Wee Care subcontracts: La Causa Assistance Center; New Concept Self-Development Center, Inc.; and V. E. Carter Child Development Corp. These three subcontractors provide presanction notices to families, review good-cause and exemption claims, verify attendance for Learnfare teenagers not enrolled in Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), and provide case management services. MPS performed attendance verification for its own students beginning in January 1993; during the first part of our study period, Job Service was responsible for attendance verification.

State and federal funding provided for Milwaukee County Learnfare-related activities included:

CY 1992	CY 1993	Activities Funded
$ 910,000	$ 910,000	Presanction review and case management provided under contract with Wee Care Day Care Nursery Centers, Inc.
240,000	275,260	Operation of the Department of Human Services' Learnfare Unit
2,117,692	2,317,592	Alternative education programs sponsored by MPS and Job Service
66,000	400,000	MPS attendance verification activities
$3,333,692	$3,902,852	

Learnfare Teenagers with Reported Attendance Problems

As indicated by a Learnfare status of "monitored," "sanctioned," or "good cause," 6,093 teenagers were reported to have attendance problems for at least one month during the 1992-93 school year. Of these, 61.7 percent were female, and 21.7 percent were heads of households.

As of January 1, 1993, the average age of teenagers with attendance problems was 16.3 years:

Age	Distribution
12	0.2%
13	5.4
14	9.5
15	16.3
16	21.2
17	23.8
18	14.6
19	8.2
20	0.8

Review Procedures and General Findings

Although we could identify all teenagers who had been coded "monitored," "sanctioned," and "good cause" during our study period, we could not readily determine which of the monitored teenagers had been referred to Wee Care for case management during our study period. Not all monitored teenagers are referred to Wee Care; only those for whom a sanction is being considered are referred. We selected our sample of 200 cases from those teenagers who had received codes of "sanctioned" and "good cause" after we determined, in consultation with Wee Care staff, that nearly all of the teenagers referred to Wee Care with a "monitored" Learnfare status have sanction or good-cause codes entered shortly after referral to Wee Care. This sample, then, does not include the few teenagers who might have been referred to Wee Care for presanction procedures while on monthly monitoring and remained in "monitored" status after presanction activities were completed.

Of the 200 cases we selected, 20 had not been referred to Wee Care. In 19 of these cases, the reasons for the lack of referral appear to have been appropriate under Milwaukee County policies at that time: there were 17 cases in which county staff determined that teenagers had good cause for not attending school, and therefore Wee Care presanction procedures were not necessary; in 2 other cases, Learnfare sanctions were entered because the families failed to provide information to their economic support specialists, rather than for any reason relating to school attendance. In the 20th case, a self-described dropout was sanctioned at application, so that no presanction referral to Wee Care would have been made. Milwaukee County has since adopted a practice of referring such teenagers for case management services.

Among the remaining 180 cases, records for 6 could not be located. Of the remaining 174, as of August 31, 1993,

26 cases contained evidence that assessments had been performed:

7	open and active
2	closed—client attained goals or improved Learnfare status
7	closed—client became ineligible
9	closed—client uncooperative or withdrew
1	status not clear

148 cases contained no evidence of assessment:

1	client responded, assessment scheduled
4	offers in progress
34	client refused services
1	no attempts to offer services
53	offers ceased—no response
25	offers ceased—client became ineligible
11	offers ceased—no reason noted
19	status not clear

We also reviewed case management policies and procedures and interviewed staff of Milwaukee County, Wee Care, and the three subcontractors, as well as teenage recipients of case management services in Milwaukee County.

Presanction Procedures

Milwaukee County presanction procedures are more complex than the procedures in the other nine counties we studied because, under the terms of the *Kronquist* stipulation, attendance verification is required for all MPS teenagers before the presanction process begins. In other counties, verification is performed only if the family contests the presanction notice.

For non-MPS teenagers for whom schools report poor attendance, county staff forward attendance reports to Wee Care, where they are treated as referrals for presanction and case management services. MPS teenagers are referred to Wee Care for presanction reviews only after their initial reports of poor attendance have been verified by MPS. Each month, this includes approximately 1,300 teenagers who have not met the attendance requirement, and approximately 350 teenagers who are believed to be dropouts.

Wee Care receives approximately 750 to 1,300 presanction referrals, including both MPS and non-MPS teenagers, each month. Wee Care staff assign the referrals to presanction case managers in the three subcontracting agencies. Cases that had been previously referred are reassigned to the previous case managers; new cases are assigned to the agencies according to zip code unless language needs and ethnicity require referral to specially qualified case managers.

When a presanction case manager receives a referral, he or she prepares and mails the standard presanction notice to the family, arranging an appointment at the agency to establish whether the teenager had good cause for the reported absences. After the family has responded or had a chance to respond to the notice, the case manager notifies the County regarding the appropriateness of a sanction, depending on whether the family established good cause or a Learnfare exemption. For non-MPS teenagers, whose attendance reports were not verified before referral to Wee Care, the presanction case manager will contact the school to verify the information if the family questions its accuracy. If the school cannot verify the unexcused absences, the case manager will notify the County that a sanction is not appropriate.

When the Department and Legal Action jointly reviewed the presanction process in Milwaukee County, they found three deficient areas:

- the presanction letter was often not completed correctly, did not include the relevant dates of absence, or was missing from the files;

- presanction case managers did not adequately assist families in documenting good cause and were inconsistent and inflexible about documentation requirements; and

- contact between the presanction case manager and families was not documented.

In response to these findings, Milwaukee County and Wee Care decided to:

- reorganize staff so that case managers would specialize in either presanction or case management activities;

- provide additional specialized training, especially in the presanction activities for which deficiencies were found; and

- increase monitoring of presanction activities through biweekly visits to subcontracted agencies to review policies and forms.

Beginning in February 1993, presanction and case management responsibilities for the 20 case managers were separated. Ten presanction workers remain in the office and concentrate solely on scheduling and completing good-cause interviews, while ten case managers are assigned only case management responsibilities and are able to leave the office to contact and work with potential clients. In addition, lead case managers of the subcontracted agencies indicated that monthly staff meetings with Wee Care's Learnfare director provided an opportunity to review and improve procedures.

County Offers of Case Management

Milwaukee County policies require Wee Care to offer case management only to sanctioned teenagers, although teenagers who are found to have good cause may be referred for case management. Prior to February 1993, when presanction and case management activities were still combined, it was not unusual for the first offer of service to be made at the end of the good-cause interview. If the family was not present for the good-cause interview, the first offer of case management, scheduling a home visit, was mailed to the family on the same day the case was referred for a sanction. If the family did not meet the case manager for the first scheduled home visit, the case manager would close the case. Of the 148 cases we observed in which offers were terminated because clients did not accept services, 27 percent were closed after one offer of case management.

Since February 1993, all teenagers are offered case management after the initial sanction, but teenagers who are subsequently sanctioned or teenagers who have good cause are offered case management at the discretion of case managers conducting good-cause interviews.

No clear expectations have been developed for Wee Care case managers with regard to how frequently and when subsequent case management offers will be made to teenagers who are repeatedly sanctioned. We noted cases in which teenagers who initially declined case management were not referred for case management for subsequent sanctions, in one case for nine months.

After cases are referred for case management, the lead case manager reviews them to determine which cases are new. New cases are assigned to case managers based on their workloads. As noted, teenagers who previously received case management are referred to the case managers who previously handled their cases.

Beginning in February 1993, case managers were required to make four attempts to offer case management: three announced home visits and one unannounced visit. This policy appears to be followed with reasonable consistency. The case managers send form letters within five days of referral, introducing themselves and scheduling a home visit.

When a family is not at home to receive the case manager, another home visit must be made. Letters to schedule subsequent visits must be mailed within three days. Case managers can make the unannounced home visit at any time after their clients have missed at least one scheduled home visit.

All three subcontracted case management agencies sent the same form letter, which was addressed to the head of the household rather than the teenager. This practice was the result of a decision to emphasize household heads' roles in addressing teenagers' attendance problems. The same form letter is used regardless of the household head's age, the teenager's Learnfare status, or the family's previous involvement with the agency. One of the three agencies extends offers in languages other than English.

When attempts to reach clients by mail or telephone failed because clients had moved or had their telephones disconnected, case managers promptly and consistently contacted county Learnfare staff to report the information and to obtain, if possible, more current information about the clients.

Family Assessments

In the 180 cases in our sample referred to Wee Care, we observed 26 assessments of varying quality. Case managers from the subcontracted agencies usually conducted a single interview with the teenager and parent during a home visit. Case managers are trained to do a standard assessment interview designed to elicit information on the entire family and its functioning, but the required documentation of the interviews is limited. Without documentation, we could not always determine the extent to which case managers performed thorough interviews; in addition, without documentation the information is unavailable to the agency or to subsequent case managers. Some files included complete descriptions of a family's circumstances, while others appeared perfunctory. Overall, the assessments in Milwaukee County were not as thorough as the assessments conducted in other counties. Milwaukee County case managers identified an average of 1.4 needs per teenager referred for case management, compared to an average of 2.7 needs for teenagers living in the seven other counties in which Learnfare assessments were performed. In half of the assessments, case managers did not document the cause of the attendance problems, such as personal illness, family illness or death, or the unavailability of child day care.

Case managers are instructed to consult with school staff to obtain their perspective on a teenager's academic, social, behavioral, and physical health history. However, we found no evidence that case managers attempted to gather information from any sources other than the family: no observed assessments contained the required school information. Wee Care officials believe school contacts occur but may not be documented, and they explained that in many cases for several reasons, school officials may simply be unfamiliar with students.

Nevertheless, the leading need identified for Milwaukee County teenagers was alternative education. Case managers described a process in which referrals to alternative education placements were based largely upon the teenagers' expressed preferences, rather than on any consultation with the school or other assessment of the suitability of alternative education. Before our study period, Learnfare case managers in Milwaukee County could refer MPS teenagers to that district's Comprehensive Service Center to obtain assessments of their educational needs and referral to appropriate alternative schools, if necessary. However, MPS discontinued this service after the 1991-92 school year, so that currently no reliable source of such assessments is available until after teenagers have enrolled in alternative schools.

Service Plans

Referral to services as a result of Learnfare assessment was limited to child day care, alternative education, and employment assistance. As with assessments, the documentation required of case managers—a brief outline of the plan for enrolling the student or improving poor attendance—lacked substantive comments and was sometimes not provided at all.

In addition, in many of the cases in which services were recommended, we saw no evidence that case managers did more than give the teenagers information on how to contact the recommended service providers. In others, case managers noted a need but did not recommend services. When asked about the lack of referrals, case management staff explained that case managers are trained to make a referral only after the family and the case manager agree about what problems need to be addressed, and a family is referred to outside services after the case manager can gauge the family's response to the services. In other words, the case managers have not made referrals because they have not established ongoing relationships that would allow them to ascertain the services from which the families they serve would benefit.

Monitoring and Follow-Up

Milwaukee County case management policy requires monthly follow-up, but this did not always occur. Twelve of the 20 cases that had been open at least one month contained documentation of follow-up activities. Two teenagers with whom we met reported that their case managers had followed up by contacting their schools to confirm attendance; one also reported that the case manager made repeated efforts to enroll the teenager's parent in a treatment program.

Additional Observations

Wee Care and Milwaukee County officials believe that the lack of documentation of their efforts is less a reflection of limited efforts and more a result of the large caseloads case managers are asked to manage. They report caseloads of more than 90 per month for six of ten case manager positions; the remaining four positions were vacant as of December 1993.

Summary

Learnfare case management in Milwaukee County benefits from several policies and practices adopted by the County, Wee Care, and the subcontracted agencies, including:

- extending at least four offers of case management services in addition to those printed on notice forms;
- conducting assessments in the home, with the entire family;
- providing adequate instruction to case managers regarding the conduct of assessments, encouraging relatively comprehensive interviews; and
- having a reliable system of identifying repeat referrals and returning them to their original case managers.

In addition, Wee Care has worked to encourage participation in case management by meeting with community groups to explain the Learnfare program and the services available.

To improve Learnfare case management in Milwaukee County:

- The County and Wee Care could communicate specific expectations to case managers regarding how soon case management services will be offered again when clients fail to respond or refuse services.
- Case managers could be required to record more of the information they gather, with their related observations, and to specifically address the problems causing poor school attendance in all assessments.
- Case managers could be required to attempt contact with staff of the teenager's school, to determine whether the school has identified the truancy problem and what related services, if any, it is providing or would recommend.
- Case managers could be required to include specific objectives and anticipated dates of service in service plans.
- Case managers could be required to contact recommended service providers to ensure that referrals to services result in service delivery.

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APPENDIX XIII

Racine County
Learnfare Case Management Profile

Presanction activities are performed by economic support specialists in the Racine County Human Services Department. Case management services are provided by a contracted social services agency, the Opportunity Industrialization Center of Racine, Inc. (OIC). OIC employs three full-time Learnfare case managers, who extend offers of services to potential clients, meet with those who accept, perform family assessments, develop service plans to address the attendance problems, and monitor teenagers' attendance.

In CY 1992, Racine County spent its entire supplemental Learnfare case management allocation of $57,675. For CY 1993, the County was allocated $62,013, of which $57,673 had been spent through November 1993. The annual budgeted amounts, as reported in Racine County's annual case management plans, were higher: $156,000 for CY 1992, and $152,200 for CY 1993.

Racine County has also received a federally funded grant to provide educational services to AFDC teenagers involved with the juvenile justice system, in order to promote their participation in school upon release. This project was awarded a total of $588,711 in federal funds, with a matching amount provided by the County, for operation from CY 1992 through CY 1994. The project has no direct relationship to Learnfare case management services provided by OIC.

Learnfare Teenagers with Reported Attendance Problems

As indicated by a Learnfare status of "monitored," "sanctioned," or "good cause," 450 teenagers were reported to have attendance problems for at least one month during the 1992-93 school year. Of these, 71.3 percent were female, and 30 percent were heads of households.

On January 1, 1993, the average age of teenagers with attendance problems was 16.4 years:

Age	Distribution
13	6.4
14	10.4
15	13.6
16	19.6
17	21.3
18	18.2
19	9.6
20	0.9

Review Procedures and General Findings

For our review, we randomly selected 96 files, or 21 percent of the 450 teenagers with attendance problems referred to OIC during the 1992-93 school year. As of August 31, 1993, 18 case files contained current assessments:

6	open and active
5	open but inactive
3	closed—client attained goals or improved Learnfare status
1	closed—client became ineligible
3	closed—client uncooperative or withdrew

78 cases contained no evidence that assessments had been completed during our study period:

2	assessment in progress but not yet completed
7	offers in progress
6	client refused services
21	offers ceased—no response
21	offers ceased—improved Learnfare status
15	offers ceased—client became ineligible
1	offers ceased—no reason noted
2	other outcome without an assessment
3	status not clear

Three of the 78 cases without current assessments contained records of Learnfare assessments that had been performed before the study period but were no longer in force.

We interviewed all three case managers at OIC, the OIC supervisor, and county staff with Learnfare responsibilities. In addition, with OIC's assistance we conducted a group interview with seven teenagers who had received Learnfare case management from OIC.

Presanction Procedures

In November 1992, the Department and Legal Action's joint review of presanction procedures found several deficiencies, which included:

- inadequate documentation that a presanction review process was conducted before imposition of a sanction;

- use of a non-standard presanction notice form;

- incomplete information provided on presanction forms mailed to clients;

- incomplete documentation of the basis for decisions to impose a sanction; and

- inconsistent suspension of sanctions in the cases of dropouts when those dropouts had good cause for not attending school.

In response, Racine County submitted a corrective action plan and adopted other procedures, which included:

- re-examining all questioned cases, and correcting sanctions as necessary;
- re-training all economic support staff;
- collecting and destroying all non-standard forms and replacing them with standard, required forms;
- ensuring that every required form is correctly completed on a timely basis for each case appearing to be in need of presanction activity, through monitoring by economic support supervisors;
- requiring county quality-control staff to review, on a monthly basis, the procedures conducted in all sanctioned cases;
- clarifying steps to be taken when a sanctioned dropout has good cause for not attending school; and
- reviewing all sanctions entered for the months of October, November, and December 1992.

County Offers of Case Management Services

Racine County's contracted case management provider makes individual case management offers to all teenagers with reported attendance problems. OIC receives notice of teenagers with reported attendance problems as a byproduct of routine economic support procedures. Copies of monthly monitoring notices and presanction notices are sent to OIC at the same time they are sent to the families, and OIC is provided with a copy of the state-generated monthly case management report, which lists each teenager coded as "monitored," "sanctioned," or "good-cause."

Upon receiving a referral, the three case managers assign the cases among themselves and promptly send a letter offering services to the case head. If the teenager has had previous contact with OIC, the agency's policy is to reassign the former case manager, a policy that is consistently carried out. OIC case managers begin closely monitoring attendance for all referred teenagers, including those with whom no direct contact is made, directly from school attendance reports.

The first offer of case management services is made within a few days of the referral. Subsequent offers are made at least once a month. OIC's written policy is to extend seven offers to each teenager—three letters, three telephone calls, and one attempt to visit the teenager's home. The practice was closer to a policy case managers described in interviews: three attempts to contact the client are made, including a telephone call when possible. Among the files included in our review, an average of 3.3 attempts were made to contact clients before cases were closed for non-response. In 76 percent of the cases closed because of non-response, the case manager had relied exclusively on mailed offers. OIC case managers stated that they rarely attempted unscheduled home visits to offer services, primarily because of personal safety concerns.

OIC has no standard letter offering case management services: case managers are free to write whatever they believe will be most suitable to the client. As a result, we observed a wide variety of letters in our file review, some of higher quality than others. If the client had previously been involved with OIC, case managers frequently referred to the previous involvement in the offer letter.

When attempts to reach clients by mail or telephone failed because clients had moved or had their telephones disconnected, OIC case managers promptly and consistently contacted county economic support workers to report the information and to obtain, if possible, more current information about the clients.

Family Assessments

OIC case managers initiate case management services by performing an assessment of family needs relating to the teenager's school attendance problems. The assessment consists of a comprehensive, structured interview based on a six-page questionnaire that focuses on family history and relationships; personal behaviors; and educational experience, including reasons for the poor attendance. This interview is usually performed in the OIC office, although case managers visit the home when requested by a client.

Case managers rely on the teenagers to report any ongoing services with which they are involved, and files show no routine attempt to contact other social service providers or the schools, either to obtain additional information about a teenager or to coordinate services. Case managers and county staff believe that school district staff are too busy to assist them beyond providing attendance information.

An average of 2.7 needs were identified in each of the 21 assessments (both current and outdated) we observed, in 10 different areas of need, indicating that Racine County's assessments are relatively thorough in comparison to other counties' we observed. Alternative education, tutoring and other academic assistance, and student counseling were identified in nine cases each. The most frequently identified need in OIC assessments was for affiliation and motivation, in 13 cases.

Service Plans

We observed 17 complete, current service plans written in conjunction with the assessments. After service plans are written they are signed by teenagers and their parents, if the parents are participating. Goals and objectives are clearly stated and focus appropriately on school attendance and completion.

The most frequently recommended service was "motivation classes," cited in 13 of the 17 complete service plans we observed. These classes were described by OIC case managers as social-recreational group activities intended to build an affiliation and trust, in support of engaging the clients in additional needed services later. However, in none of these cases were service plans later updated to include services intended to deal with more serious problems.

Service plans result in few referrals to services other than those provided by OIC. Of the 57 service needs for which providers were identified in 21 cases, only 15 referrals involved providers other than OIC: 6 referrals were for alternative education services, and 3 referrals were for child care. Only four cases included referrals to any services other than child care or alternative education that were not provided through OIC.

We observed no indication in any cases that services included in plans were not available on a timely basis to the teenagers who needed them. However, in interviews, county staff and case managers expressed dissatisfaction with the narrow range of alternative education options available locally. Case managers also explained that services known to be unavailable would not be included in service plans.

Monitoring and Follow-Up

Case managers routinely and reliably continued to monitor their clients' school attendance, through reports sent directly from the school districts to OIC. However, files included little documentation of follow-up activities related to the prescribed service plans, including those services OIC was to provide.

It is unclear whether this is a documentation problem or an absence of activity, since case managers, when interviewed, could in several instances comment upon a teenager's participation even though it was not documented in the file. In addition, several files noted that teenagers were presented with rewards for regular attendance at prescribed OIC workshops and groups, which indicates that the case manager was aware of a teenager's participation.

We observed no instances in which assessments were updated after having been performed, and OIC policies do not include a provision for routine updating of assessments.

Additional Observations

Learnfare case managers in Racine County exhibit a notable level of involvement with their clientele which cannot be described with quantitative measures. Our questions about the processing of certain cases would often elicit explanations that exhibited familiarity with and personal concern about clients' situations. For example, one file indicated that the case manager was aware a potential client was three months pregnant before having direct contact with her. When asked how she knew, the case manager explained that a friend of the teenager's, a current OIC client, had mentioned it. The case manager then renewed attempts to contact the teenager and was successful at engaging the family in light of the new circumstances.

Teenagers in the group interview expressed satisfaction with OIC services. Confirming case managers' explanations of why clients accept offers of services, teenagers cited word-of-mouth referrals from friends and relatives when asked how they came to be involved with OIC.

Summary

Learnfare case management in Racine County has several strong features. Case managers appear to have relatively long tenure in their jobs and have developed extensive knowledge of their clientele. Individual and sometimes highly personalized offers of service are made to all teenagers with reported attendance problems, on a consistently timely basis. OIC case managers appear to have effective contact with economic support staff, which enables them to obtain current addresses and telephone numbers and, on occasion, to assist economic support staff in correcting attendance information. The assessment instrument appropriately focuses on the causes of the attendance problem while covering the range of personal, social, and economic issues that might disrupt a teenager's ability or motivation to attend school. Finally, OIC case managers are provided with complete and timely school attendance information, so they are able to notice improvements or deterioration in their clients' attendance promptly.

To improve Learnfare case management in Racine County:

- The County could devise a way to clearly identify for OIC which clients are to be offered case management services and which previously referred clients are no longer eligible. Under the current system, OIC case managers spend a significant portion of time reviewing attendance and other data to determine a client's current AFDC and Learnfare status, which is largely redundant with the tasks being performed by economic support workers.

- OIC case managers could expand the methods by which they offer case management services to clients, particularly by attempting home visits in more cases. In addition, care should be taken that all mailed invitations contain information regarding the location of the OIC office and directions to reach it.

- Assessments could include information from additional sources, particularly school officials and county social workers who may be working with the teenager and his or her family. Even if this information is not written into the assessment instrument itself, case managers could inform themselves in more detail about ongoing services, instead of relying solely on information reported by the families.

- Service plans could be more comprehensive and include referrals of teenagers and their families to a broader range of services.

- Monitoring of the clients' performance with regard to the service plans could be more frequent and consistent, and service plans could be updated more regularly, particularly when they include referrals to motivational classes in anticipation of involving the teenager later in more substantive problem-solving services.

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APPENDIX XIV

Rock County
Learnfare Case Management Profile

Presanction activities are performed by economic support specialists in the Rock County Department of Social Services. Case management services are provided by both the County's youth services division, which employs one full-time Learnfare case manager, and counselors at a contracted service agency, Helping Urban Beloit (HUB).

During our study period, however, a case manager in the County's economic support division had responsibility for both presanction activities and case management services. In July 1993, responsibility for case management services was removed from the economic support division and assigned to the youth services division, at which time all procedures were reviewed.

In CY 1992, Rock County spent its entire $46,288 allocation of supplementary Learnfare case management funding. For CY 1993, the County was allocated $49,720, of which $41,098 had been spent through November 1993. In addition, the County received $110,243 in federal funds, and provided a matching amount, during CY 1993 as part of a multi-year project grant to provide counseling and support services for pregnant teenagers and teenage parents in Beloit.

Learnfare Teenagers with Reported Attendance Problems

As indicated by a Learnfare status of "monitored," "sanctioned," or "good cause," 323 teenagers were reported to have attendance problems for at least one month during the 1992-93 school year. Of these, 70.3 percent were female, and 38.7 percent were heads of households.

As of January 1, 1993, the average age of teenagers with reported attendance problems was 16.5 years:

Age	Distribution
12	0.7%
13	6.9
14	10.8
15	13.9
16	13.6
17	17.3
18	17.0
19	18.6
20	1.2

Review Procedures and General Findings

Selection and observation of a representative sample of cases was made difficult by inadequate recordkeeping during the study period. Because Rock County staff had informed us that case management records for the period we intended to review were not in order, we initially requested whatever files could be located; 37 were available at that time. Later, we randomly selected 65 cases from a listing of teenagers who would have been referred under county policies during our study period; records were located for 40, and these served as our sample.

Eighteen files in our sample did not contain enough information to permit observations regarding case activity. Of the 22 cases in which some activity was recorded, as of August 31, 1993,

3 case records contained evidence of Learnfare assessments:

2	open but inactive
1	status not clear

19 case records contained no evidence of assessments:

1	offers in progress
2	offers ceased—no response
1	case closed—improved Learnfare status
5	offers ceased—client became ineligible
7	offers ceased—no reason given
3	status not clear

Our direct observations of case management activity relate to services provided before August 31, 1993, after which time extensive changes to Rock County's case management procedures took full effect. Although we interviewed staff and reviewed documents relating to the new procedures, we cannot comment fully on their implementation because they were not included in our fieldwork.

In addition to reviewing case records and documents pertaining to the policies and procedures adopted for case management in Rock County, we interviewed county staff, staff of HUB, and a group of teenage mothers served by HUB.

Presanction Procedures

In February 1993, the Department and Legal Action's review of presanction procedures found several deficiencies, which include:

- failure to provide dates of unexcused absences in the prior semester when the basis for monitoring was ten or more absences in the most recently completed semester;
- incomplete documentation of exemption and good-cause challenges by sanctioned client; and
- use of a non-standard form to document client response to presanction notice regarding school attendance information.

In response, Rock County submitted a corrective action plan and adopted other procedures, which included:

- assigning two economic support specialists to handle all aspects of an AFDC case with Learnfare teenagers through the presanction process;
- developing new forms designed as checklists to track each Learnfare case, supplement present documentation requirements, and ensure that all of the prescribed steps in the presanction process are followed; and
- reviewing all sanctions entered for the months of October, November, and December 1992 and January 1993, and repeating presanction procedures for those cases in which errors had been made.

County Offers of Case Management

During the 1992-93 school year, Rock County made no offers of case management services beyond the formal, routine notices included on standard state forms. However, since July 1, 1993, the case manager has been making additional offers through a series of letters developed for different recipients, such as parents of Learnfare teenagers, teenagers on monthly monitoring, and dropouts. These letters all include a description of the services the case manager can provide, a discussion of the services available to help teenagers return to or remain in school, and a request that the teenager or the teenager's parent(s) telephone the case manager to arrange a meeting.

Under the new procedures, HUB staff will also recruit additional teenagers for services through outreach efforts, such as visits to the schools. The county Learnfare case manager reviews a list of new clients each month to identify those eligible for Learnfare services.

Family Assessments

Lack of documentation made it difficult to determine whether the previous case manager had been completing family assessments and developing service plans during the 1992-93 school year. The three assessments for which we had evidence appeared to be informal conversations with the teenagers' families in which problems preventing a teenager from attending school were not identified explicitly: for example, one case file indicated the reason the teenager was not attending school was because the student did not like school. There was evidence that the previous case manager had discussed services such as child care and assistance with school enrollment with other Learnfare teenagers, although assessments were not completed and there was no documentation that any services had been provided in these cases.

Under Rock County's new procedures, the county Learnfare case manager and HUB staff will both complete assessments for Learnfare teenagers involved in their programs. The Learnfare case manager is expected to review the assessments completed by HUB staff to ensure that they are appropriately documented and that service needs identified by the counselors are being addressed.

Service Plans

Because assessments completed during our study period were not thorough, the previous case manager did not identify specific services to address the teenagers' attendance problems. For example, one service plan was limited to statements that the teenager should improve both attendance, to prevent future sanctions, and relationships with school officials; the case manager provided information about gangs to the teenager's mother. The service goal indicated on this assessment was high school graduation, and the recommended "service," high school, was to continue until graduation.

Current county staff believe, and some documentation exists, that the previous case manager also met frequently with school officials to discuss Learnfare teenagers' attendance problems and develop arrangements under which they could return to school, such as flexible schedules or other alternatives. However, this activity was not well documented.

County staff stated that Rock County has sufficient services available to address the problems that could prevent teenagers from attending school. In particular, there are several alternative education programs offered in the county, ranging from GED instruction at Blackhawk Technical College to programs for teenage parents.

Monitoring and Follow-Up

According to county policy, case management services are to terminate when attendance improves or the teenager graduates, leaves AFDC, or is no longer cooperating with the case manager. During our study period, case closure was determined exclusively by the previous case manager, and case files did not include documentation as to why active cases were being closed.

Summary

During the study period, Rock County had not implemented minimum requirements for Learnfare case management. However, since then the County has made substantial progress, including:

- developing a policy and procedures for offering Learnfare case management to sanctioned teenagers and, depending on workload, teenagers on monthly monitoring; and
- developing standards for documentation of Learnfare assessments and a procedure by which assessments performed by the contracted case management agency will be reviewed by the county Learnfare case manager.

Learnfare case management in Rock County might be further improved by adopting additional written procedures that describe the expectations and goals of case management services, in accordance with the *Learnfare Case Management Manual* to be distributed by the Department.

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APPENDIX XV

Sheboygan County
Learnfare Case Management Profile

Both presanction activities and Learnfare case management are performed by staff of the Sheboygan County Department of Human Services. Economic support specialists are responsible for presanction procedures; Learnfare case management services are provided by a .5 FTE county social worker, who also reviews the cases of all Learnfare teenagers with reported attendance problems to determine whether the family is currently receiving social services and whether Learnfare case management will be offered.

Sheboygan County spent its CY 1992 and 1993 allocations of supplemental Learnfare case management funding, which totaled $3,130 and $3,369, respectively. Because of the relatively small number of AFDC teenagers with reported attendance problems, the County will not receive additional state funding for Learnfare case management in 1994.

Learnfare Teenagers with Reported Attendance Problems

As indicated by a Learnfare status of "monitored," "sanctioned," or "good cause," 59 teenagers were reported to have attendance problems for at least one month during the 1992-93 school year. Of these, 54.2 percent were female, and 18.6 percent were heads of households.

As of January 1, 1993, the average age of teenagers with reported attendance problems was 16.1 years:

Age	Distribution
12	1.6
13	5.1
14	15.3
15	15.3
16	16.9
17	25.4
18	13.6
19	6.8

Review Procedures and General Findings

We reviewed the cases for all 59 teenagers reported to have attendance problems during our study period. As of August 31, 1993,

5 case records contained evidence of Learnfare assessments:

3	closed—client attained goals or improved Learnfare status
2	closed—client became ineligible

54 case records contained no evidence that Learnfare assessments had been performed:

45	clients did not receive individual offers of Learnfare case management
8	client refused services
1	offers ceased—client became ineligible

Of the 45 clients who were not offered Learnfare case management, 29 were already receiving social services, and 18 of these had received assessments. Offers were withheld for the remaining 16 clients for various reasons, including absence of a current attendance problem.

We interviewed the county Learnfare coordinator and the social worker supervisor. In addition, the Learnfare coordinator arranged for us to meet with two teenagers.

Presanction Procedures

The Department and Legal Action's joint review of Sheboygan County's presanction procedures reported four areas of non-compliance:

- dates used as a basis for establishing teenagers' Learnfare status were not clearly documented;
- presanction review letters were incorrectly completed;
- good-cause narratives were incorrectly completed or not completed although circumstances required them; and
- economic support workers and the case manager were inappropriately requiring teenagers and their families to ask school officials to change unexcused absences to excused absences when the appropriate action may have been to grant the teenager a good-cause release from Learnfare attendance requirements.

In response to these findings, the County indicated it would take the following actions:

- economic support supervisors will review all cases before sanctions are entered;
- economic support workers will receive training; and
- a team will be assembled to conduct internal reviews of sanctioned cases.

County Offers of Case Management

As noted, the Learnfare case manager reviews the cases of all teenagers with reported attendance problems to determine whether individual offers of case management will be made. During our study period, letters offering Learnfare case management were sent to 14 families, 5 of whom accepted services and received assessments.

The case manager did not offer case management to 45 of the 59 teenagers with reported attendance problems. In 29 cases the teenagers had other, active social services cases at the time of their Learnfare referrals, and the Learnfare case manager contacted their current case managers to explain the Learnfare program and report the teenagers' current Learnfare status.

The remaining 16 teenagers were not offered Learnfare case management for other reasons. Although county policy regarding offers of case management services places highest priority on sanctioned teenagers, the case manager offered services to monitored teenagers in the earlier part of our study period. This practice was discontinued because of workload concerns. Case management was also not offered if a family had recently left the county or would soon lose eligibility for Learnfare case management because of the teenager's age or as a result of leaving AFDC.

Family Assessments

The Learnfare case manager in Sheboygan County, a county social worker, performs assessments both for Learnfare teenagers and for teenagers involved in judicial actions, such as truancy or delinquency cases. For Learnfare assessments, the case manager first checks for existing records of county social services that families may have received, then visits clients' homes to conduct family interviews based on a comprehensive six-page questionnaire that focuses on family history and relationships; personal behavior; and educational experience, including reasons for the poor attendance.

Each of the five Learnfare assessments completed by the case manager appeared to be appropriately thorough. In two cases, older teenagers requested and were provided help with specific services, and a complete assessment was not performed. In the three other cases, the case manager performed an assessment of the family needs similar in scope and content to those performed for the 18 teenagers with truancy problems who had court-ordered service plans.

Service Plans

Service plans clearly related to the school attendance problems and appeared thorough, covering all needs identified in the assessments. Recommended services included referrals to alternative education programs, English as a Second Language instruction, child care, and housing. In one case, the teenage mother was identified as in need of, and provided with, a protective payee to receive and manage her AFDC payments. Referrals to service in some cases were made by giving the clients instructions on how to arrange services, but the case manager also contacted the recommended service provider to ensure that contact had been made. In other cases, the case manager arranged services on behalf of the family.

Monitoring and Follow-Up

The Learnfare case manager used a client monitoring form to document client contact, services recommended and provided, the client's progress after referrals are made, and updates to the service plan. Both Learnfare clients and clients who received case management services based on an earlier referral received appropriate and regular follow-up.

Additional Observations

As noted, we reviewed 18 assessments provided to Learnfare teenagers as a result of other referrals to social services prior to their Learnfare referrals. These assessments appeared thorough and routinely addressed school attendance problems, and the cases were actively monitored after assessment. An average of 2.8 needs were identified in each case: the most commonly identified need was supervision, which was noted in all 18 assessments.

The extent to which Learnfare teenagers receive case management from social workers other than the Learnfare case manager has raised questions in Sheboygan County. Although relying on the social worker already involved in each case has clear benefits with regard to continuity and coordination of services, the Department has questioned whether non-Learnfare case managers are sufficiently familiar with Learnfare documentation requirements, particularly the requirement to file exception reports when clients cannot obtain recommended services within 30 days of referral. Although county staff report that no delays have been experienced, the County agreed to address the delay issue by referring teenagers on monthly monitoring, whenever possible, to a single case manager trained in Learnfare documentation upon their first involvement with county social services.

Summary

Learnfare case management in Sheboygan County has several strengths. The case manager, a social worker who also has responsibilities for court-ordered services including truancy enforcement, is familiar with the range of services available in the County and has ready access to records of prior services and to consultation with other social workers. The forms and procedures for assessment and case monitoring ensure thorough handling of each case from inception to closure.

Sheboygan County could consider making individual offers of Learnfare case management to all monitored teenagers.

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APPENDIX XVI

Winnebago County
Learnfare Case Management Profile

In Winnebago County, presanction activities for Learnfare teenagers are performed under contract with a private agency, rather than by county economic support staff. The County has contracted with the Winne-Fond Lake Private Industry Council since January 1, 1993; before that date, it had contracted with Chikowski Enterprise, Inc.

The contracted agency has one counselor who spends four hours per week (0.1 FTE) on Learnfare presanction responsibilities. In CY 1992, Winnebago County spent its entire allocation of supplemental Learnfare case management funding, $9,906, on presanction activities. For CY 1993, Winnebago County was allocated $10,614, of which $9,428 had been spent through November 1993.

Learnfare Teenagers with Reported Attendance Problems

As indicated by a Learnfare status of "monitored," "sanctioned," or "good cause," 106 teenagers were reported to have attendance problems for at least one month during the 1992-93 school year. Of these, 68.9 percent were female, and 40.6 percent were heads of households.

As of January 1, 1993, the average age of teenagers with reported attendance problems was 16.5 years:

Age	Distribution
12	1.0%
13	6.6
14	8.5
15	12.3
16	16.0
17	17.9
18	26.4
19	10.4
20	0.9

Review Procedures and General Findings

For our review, we randomly selected 24 cases, or just over 22 percent of teenagers with attendance problems. In no records did we observe evidence of case management activity, such as individual offers of service, assessments, or service plans: only presanction activities took place. Although case management activities are described in annual county plans, case management services have not been provided for Learnfare teenagers in Winnebago County. There is some evidence that even those families who requested services did not receive Learnfare case management.

We also interviewed county and agency staff responsible for the Learnfare program in Winnebago County. We were unable to interview teenagers from this county because no case management services had been provided during the study period.

Presanction Procedures

In July 1993, the Department and Legal Action's joint review of Winnebago County's presanction procedures found several deficiencies, including:

- no documentation that a review of current enrollment and prior-semester attendance records had been completed before a teenager was placed on monthly monitoring;
- incomplete information provided on presanction forms mailed to clients; and
- incomplete documentation of exemption and good-cause discussions with sanctioned clients.

In response, Winnebago County submitted a corrective action plan and adopted other procedures, which include:

- shifting oversight of the contract with Winne-Fond Lake from the social services program director to the financial assistance division manager;
- assigning a county economic support specialist responsibility for oversight of Learnfare procedures; and
- reviewing policy directives from the Department and establishing training sessions for county staff who deal with Learnfare.

Offers of Case Management Services

Winnebago County extends no personalized offers of case management services, but instead relies on the formal, routine offers included on the monitoring, presanction, and sanction notices. According to the Winne-Fond Lake counselor, potential clients seldom respond to routine offers of case management services.

The County's 1994 Learnfare Case Management Plan states that eligible Learnfare teenagers are to be contacted by an initial offer letter prior to being sanctioned, and it includes a copy of that letter. However, the counselor in the contracted agency reported having received instructions from the County to send no such offers. County staff confirmed for us their intention that the contracted agency perform only presanction activities and make no additional efforts to recruit clients for case management services.

On several occasions, clients have apparently inquired about or requested case management services, which were not provided. In one file, we observed an inquiry from a potential client, but no response was recorded and no case management was provided. Legal Action found two cases in which clients apparently responded to the routine offer in a presanction notice but were provided no services, although documentation in the case files indicates they could have benefited from case management. The contracted counselor recalled one teenage mother who requested and received assistance with child care during the 1992-93 school year but declined other case management services.

Assessments

Although no Learnfare case management assessments have been performed, the County has established procedures to complete assessments when clients request services. According to the counselor in the contracted agency, the assessment process involves sending the client family a five-page questionnaire, which is to be completed before a meeting.

Summary

Winnebago County has not developed a process to provide case management services. The contracted agency performs presanction activities rather than case management. Intervention and on-site oversight by state staff will be required to ensure that Winnebago County develops and implements a system for providing Learnfare case management.

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